

"When I was bombing with friends in Guangzhou, it was the happiest time."

Page 10



One cannot help but be touched by the wonders of history and human endeavor.

Page 16



Is it a bird? Is it a plane?
No, it's Slipper-man!

Page 14



BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18 2005

NO. 194

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM

By Chu Meng

China's nascent environmental movement celebrated its biggest triumph last month when State Environmental Protection Administration officials announced the hydroelectric dam project at Tiger Leaping Gorge in Yunnan Province would be halted pending a thorough scientific and social assessment. The review of the project is not expected to be completed until 2008.

The dam had provoked concerted opposition from environmental NGOs in China. As *Beijing Today* reported last October, China Huaneng Group had launched the Tiger Leaping Dam project with neither central government approval nor a government-sponsored environmental evaluation. Opponents argued the dam would endanger the ecosystem along the river and force the relocation of the region's 90,000 people, most of them poor ethnic-minority farmers.

NGOs mourn hero

Xiao Liangzhong, 32, was a key figure in the fight against the Tiger Leaping Dam, as well as against a series of other controversial dams in southwest China. A scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Xiao was a passionate and tireless advocate who grew up by the Jinsha River where it cuts through Tiger Leaping Gorge. Tragically, he died of a heart attack on January 12 this year, though not before learning of the government's decision to suspend the Tiger Leaping Dam project.

Liu Jianqiang, a reporter for *Southern Weekend* newspaper, was one of the authors of a crucial article that caught the attention of senior government officials last September.

"We could not have done those stories without Xiao," said Liu. "He was an exponent of grassroots green NGOs in China today."

But Xiao was far from alone in his battle against the dam-builders. A series of homegrown green NGOs such as China Green, China Rivers and Friends of Nature was also instrumental in arousing a massive protest campaign that finally made waves in the mainstream media. The media coverage sparked the State Council investigation that has not only halted the Tiger Leaping Gorge project, but also suspended work on 13 large dams on a pristine stretch of the Nu River, also in Yunnan Province.

The victory in the fight against Tiger Leaping Dam is a milestone in the accelerating growth of NGO activity in China. "In the mid-1990s, there were very few groups promoting environmental protection," Wang Yongchen, an environmental journalist who helped found Green Earth Volunteers, told *Beijing Today*. "Now, according to government statistics, China has more than 2,000 nongovernmental environmental groups." Green Earth Volunteers claims 50,000 members, making it one of China's largest eco-NGOs.

Yet environmental activism is only a small part of the NGO story. There are now reckoned to be 165,600 NGOs in China, working in areas as diverse as minority rights and AIDS care. And not only are these organizations tolerated, they are often supported by formally suspicious officials because "the government can't say, 'We don't want a better civil society,'" said Fu Tao, a Beijing-based publisher of newsletters

For Love, Not Money

China's NGOs build civil society



Zhou Xiaolin, 13, leaves the "Lifetime Express" train after a team of Hong Kong doctors performed surgery on her to remove a congenital cataract on April 10, 2004 in Chongzhou, Guangxi. Without Life-

time Express, a Hong Kong-based NGO that performs cataract operations for free, many people in rural areas would remain partly blind

Photo by Katharina Hesse

on China's NGO community.

Power to the people

As political decentralization has dispersed power to the provincial and even city level, the central authorities have found NGOs to be useful sources of local information that, in effect, extend the reach of watchdog agencies. Perhaps more significantly, NGOs and like-minded government institutions have been able to network, both together and with foreign counterparts, leading to more vigorous domestic debate. "In the past, people just did what the government told them to do. Now they are demanding a voice," Wang Yongchen said.

Wang Ming, head of Tsinghua University's NGO Research Center, says China's NGOs are the result of socioeconomic developments since the beginning of the reform and opening era. Economic development has led to wider demands for a more open society, and as the active involvement of citizens in social administration and social services increases, the status and utility of NGOs grows daily more evident. Wang argues this has created a positive environment for the rapid emergence and vigorous development of NGOs in China.

"The government can't say, 'We don't want a better civil society'"

"The potential for cooperation between Chinese and international NGOs is vast"

NGOs help the government address many ticklish issues. For example, Friends of Nature, set up in 1994 and now one of China's most important eco-NGOs, works on saving the endangered Tibetan antelope. Another successful example is the China STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease) & AIDS Foundation, which is attached to the Ministry of Health. Working together with foreign counterparts, the foundation set up the "Red Ribbon" program in 2003 to implement a series of activities promoting AIDS prevention and control, publicizing AIDS-related knowledge through the media, and providing free condoms to the public.

Obstacles to development

Despite the achievements of recent years, certain restricting factors still hold back the NGO sector in China.

Fu Tao told *Beijing Today* he believes the legal environment in which NGOs operate is unsound. He argues that policies and regulations do not necessarily meet objective, practical requirements. Last year, government departments such as the Ministry of Civil Affairs did release a series of laws and regulations in order to promote the development of NGOs, for example

the Social Organization Law, Donation Law, Non-Commercial Institutions Law and Regulations for the Registration and Management of Foundations. However, Fu said their results had been disappointing.

"After a drafting process that lasted many years, the State Council finally approved the new Regulations for the Registration and Management of Foundations, effective from June 2004," said Fu. "Applying to both Chinese and overseas foundations working in China, they were expected to boost private and corporate philanthropy. However, there are no clear-cut laws and regulations saying that enterprises can deduct tax if they donate a certain amount of income into charities affairs or foundations. This is the bottleneck of Chinese domestic NGO development, because steady and sufficient financial support is a must. Relying on foreign funds, Chinese NGOs can never grow up independently and healthily."

Future strategies

"NGOs are being brought into the international arena in the wake of Chinese industries cooperating with foreign companies as China has opened to the outside world," said Wang Ming, who argues such internationalization is a positive process. Wang says cooperating with international NGOs would not only promote a sense of public service responsibility in society, but also be a good way to accumulate administrative experience.

"On the one hand, we are studying their organizational management methods, including program design, evaluation of project management and ways of managing funds.

We hope that during this cooperative process, China's non-profit organizations will mature. On the other hand, we will work hard to complete the legislative work that will apply to the activities of international non-profit organizations in China."

"At present, based on investigation and research, we have already drafted and passed to the State Council a 'Regulation on Registration and Management of Foreign Non-profit Organizations in China.' Currently, the State Council Legal Office is working on it in the hope of promulgating it this year in order to pave the way to establishing a system to manage the activities of international non-profit organizations in China."

The cleft palate repair program that brings together the American "Smile Train" NGO and the Chinese Charities Federation is a good example of a program that brings out the best of both associations. Smile Train offers abundant funding and advanced techniques, while the Chinese Charities Federation and local charity NGOs provide information on the distribution and identification of Chinese afflicted by cleft palate.

"The potential for cooperation between Chinese and international NGOs is vast," said Wang. "What we need now is for our government to work hard to provide guidance and for NGOs to take the initiative."

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: JIAN RONG

EDITOR: HOU MINGXIN

DESIGNER: LI SHI

Insurance Firms Get Green Light on Share Transactions

By Sun Yongjian

A set of new guidelines were issued Tuesday allowing insurance firms to apply for independent transaction seats in securities firms, marking a substantial phase for insurance firms to invest in share transactions.

Jointly released by the China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC) and China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC), the new guidelines provide precise definitions on some specified technical details regarding insurance firms' direct investment in the stock market, such as transaction seats at bourses, assets custody and settlement, and investment percentage.

Insurance institutional investors'

total business conducted by means of used transaction seats can be entrusted to newly applied seats as a whole when the securities firm is placed under risk control by the watchdog, the guidelines stated.

No ceilings will be placed on the insurance institutional investors to purchase newly issued shares by means of securities accounts, meanwhile overseas insurance companies' domestic branches will be allowed to apply to invest in shares as well.

"The insurance companies will play an important role as institutional investors in the primary market because the insurance companies will enjoy some preferential policies which are not available to other institu-

tional investors," *Shanghai Securities* reported Wednesday.

For instance, one transaction seat will be available for more than one account, in accordance with different insurance products, according to the report.

Two more parallel rules will be jointly issued by CSRC and China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC), the report also revealed.

Total domestic insurance funds amounted to 1.1 trillion yuan by the end of last year, according to a report in *International Finance* Wednesday.

In line with CIRC regulations, not more than 5 percent of the total assets of insurance companies are allowed to be invested in the stock market, thus, 55 billion yuan of insurance funds can

be expected to enter the stock market, the report said.

"The guidelines are apparently beneficial news for the ailing stock market, which hovered around six-year lows in the final sessions before the week-long holiday," Professor Zhao Xijun of Renmin University's Financial Institute told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

However an analyst with New China Life Insurance, who declined to give his name, told *Beijing Today*, "But the positive effect on the stock market will be very limited, because direct investment will not cover a large proportion of the insurance companies' assets due to the principle of risk control that any insurance companies must observe."

US Announces New Fees for Consular Services

By Pan Hao

The US Department of State announced a new schedule of fees for consular services last Thursday, under which most services will see a substantial rise in charges.

Under the new fees, which take effect from March 8, the Diversity Visa Lottery surcharge will increase from US \$100 to \$375; the passport file search fee will rise from \$45 to \$60; a surcharge of \$12 will be added to current passport fees, and a surcharge of \$45 will be added to the current fees for immigrant visas. There will also be a \$500 "fraud prevention and detection fee" for persons applying for L-1 visas.

Meanwhile, clearances on visas for students, exchange visitors, temporary workers, intracompany transferees, and tourist and business categories have been extended. International students who have received a visa clearance and been issued a visa will benefit from having that clearance be valid for up to the length of the approved academic program, to a maximum of four years.

China to Open RMB Card Service in 2006

By Sun Yongjian

China's RMB bank card business will be opened to foreign enterprises by the end of 2006, Xinhua last Thursday quoted an unnamed official from the People's Bank of China (PBC), China's central bank as saying.

The move will allow the foreign banks to issue renminbi (RMB) credit and debit cards in China.

Wan Jianhua, president of China UnionPay, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday, "By the end of 2006, when domestic banking services are comprehensively opened to foreign banks, RMB bank cards are expected to be available in many countries around the world."

Judicial Committee System to Be Improved

By Qiu Jiaoning

China's Supreme Court is to enact reforms to the judicial committee system, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported Monday.

The current judicial committee system has led to certain conflicts. For instance in some big cases, the judge has no final say on the verdict, where the final decision is often made by a committee outside the law court without full and direct understanding of the debate and evidence presented by the prosecution and defence.

According to the reform plan, judicial committee members must be excellent professional judges and administrative barriers must be removed from the organizational form. In addition, the working procedure of the committee should follow the judicial proceedings through holding a court or written hearing, rather than be confined to meetings. The judicial committee members will also be required to provide a name list of the decision makers and the reason for the decision.

Transfer of Water Usage Rights Questioned

By Pan Hao

The Ministry of Water Resources has released a document titled Opinions on the Transfer of Rights of State-owned Water Resources, Xinhuanet.com reported Saturday. The document points out that the sector to which water resource rights is transferred is obliged to pay usage fees for the water.

The document says the method of calculation of the fees needs to be updated to cover running costs and day to day maintenance, protection of the natural environment, third party compensation, and validity of the transfer.

It also indicated that a region with sufficient groundwater may not transfer usage rights without permission from the relevant authority.

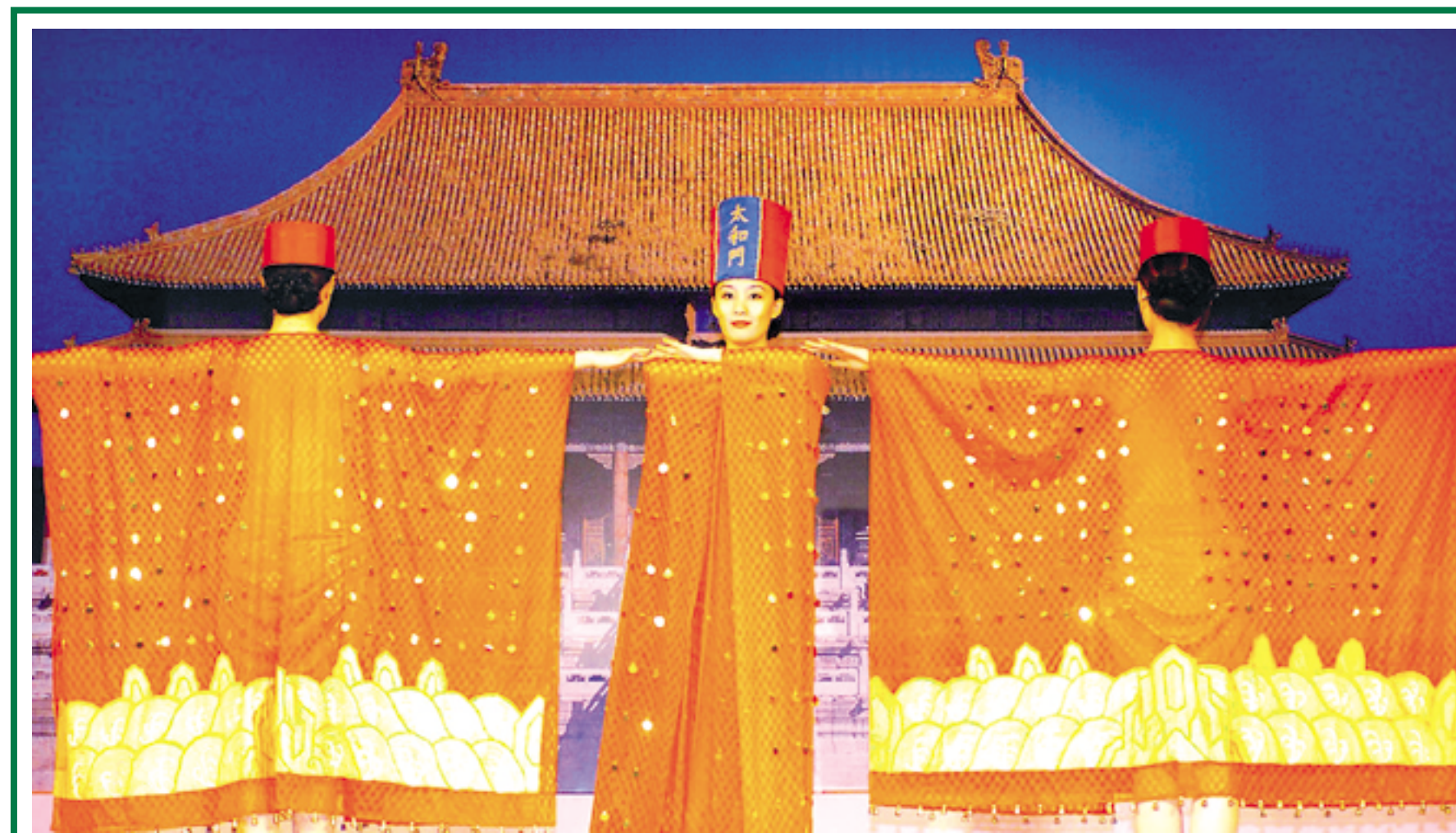
Super Rice Production Stepped Up

By Qiu Jiaoning

The promotion of "super" rice production will help raise grain output by adding more sown acreage of hybrid rice, according to a Central Government document, *People's Daily* reported Wednesday.

Yuan Longping of the Chinese National Hybrid Rice Research and Development Center, said moves were underway to popularize planting of hybrid rice over an extensive area by the end of 2006. According to Yuan, grain output is expected to increase by 30 billion kilograms annually, enough to feed 70 million more people than the current output.

Yuan Longping, known as the "father of hybrid rice," started focusing on the research of the super rice in 1997. The third phase of the plan started this year, one year ahead of schedule.



Models from Beijing participate in a fashion show organized by the Beijing Tourism Bureau in London Wednesday, as part of the Beijing-London Tourism Promotion.

Xinhua Photo

Majority of Law Firms Owned by Partners

China has 11,000 law firms, 70 percent of which are owned by lawyers, according to the Ministry of Justice.

In the past, all Chinese law firms were run by the government, under central, provincial or local justice departments. In recent years, however, the government has launched a reform of the industry to bring in into line with international practice.

Under current regulations, a law firm should be operated by at least three lawyers who have practiced for five years or longer. Meanwhile more than 100 overseas law firms have been allowed to open offices in cities including Beijing,

Shanghai and Guangzhou.

According to the ministry, some of the new domestic firms are not well managed and are not operating in accordance with law, because they do not operate as a team, but rather as separate individuals.

Efforts will be made by the government to regularize the operation of law firms and bring the activities of lawyers under control, the ministry said.

In 2005, further efforts will be made to standardize the management of law firms that have adopted partnerships, according to the ministry.

(Xinhua)

Retail Industry Faces Six Challenges

By Sun Yongjian

The Ministry of Commerce has released a research report stating that the domestic retail industry faces challenges in six areas, in comparison to the foreign retail industry, Xinhua reported Sunday.

The six areas include ability to quickly expand; cost control; marketing sales technology; ability to create brand value; and the ability to attract skilled professionals.

The report also states that the wholesale, retail and restaurant sectors make insufficient contribution to the national economy.

For instance, the domestic wholesale, retail and restaurant industries contribute less than 8 percent to the GDP, while in developed countries, it surpassed 15 per-

cent in the 1990's, the report said.

Most enterprises in the sector are small or middle-sized, lack competitive power and have low potential for future development.

Meanwhile 70 percent of the world's top 50 retail enterprises have established businesses in China. Although their market share amounts to less than 5 percent, they pose a significant threat to domestic enterprises.

The report suggests three measures to improve competitiveness in domestic retail industries, including cultivating the major brand enterprises, policy support by the government, as well as strategic development suited to the enterprises themselves.

Maritime Economy Surges

By Pan Hao

The State Oceanic Administration released its Bulletin of China Maritime Economic Statistics for 2004 at a press conference on January 31. According to the bulletin, China's ocean industries grew by 9.8 percent last year.

A report on CRIENGLISH.com says the maritime industry has seen expansion in areas around the Bohai Bay, the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta economic zones. Each zone has its own priorities but economic cooperation between the regions has also contributed to the prosperity.

According to the administration, China's maritime industries had an output worth 1.28 trillion yuan last year. The output of the offshore oil and gas industry amounted to 59.5 billion yuan, accounting for 4.6 percent of the gross output of major maritime industries. The output of offshore oil reached 28.43 million tons, up 16.6 percent on the previous year. Southern China's Guangdong Province took a leading role in the offshore oil and gas industry, with 49.6 percent of the share.

Both the country's gross output of sea salt and the handling capacity of major coastal harbors continue to rank first in the world, while the maritime ship building industry has grown rapidly, holding steady in third place.

1,378 Domestic Companies Listed

By Sun Yongjian

Domestically listed companies numbered 1,377 by the end of last year, according to figures released by the China Securities Regulatory Commission. With Huadian International Corporation, which was listed just before the Spring Festival holiday, the number of listed domestic companies now totals 1,378, Xinhua reported Tuesday.

The market value of the domestic securities market has reached 3.7 trillion yuan, the circulating market value has reached 1.17 trillion yuan, the total capital stocks have reached 714.94 billion shares, and 72.1 million accounts have been opened by investors.

By the end of 2004, there were four securities joint ventures and 13 fund management companies. Meanwhile 15 foreign institutions were granted Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor status, bringing the total number to 27. The approved QFII investment amount has reached \$3 billion.

Education Gap Grows between Rural and Urban Population

By Pan Hao

The Research into Equity Issues in Chinese Higher Education working group revealed findings Monday that showed there was a widening education gap between China's rural and urban populations.

China's rural areas have a far higher proportion of residents with low and middle education levels than the urban areas. The proportion of urban residents who have benefitted from higher education also surpasses that in rural regions.

The group's research also shows that the disparity between urban and rural areas has widened gradually as education levels have increased.

Tong Ren Tang to Market ‘Made in Hong Kong’ Medicine

By Qiu Jiaoning

Beijing Tong Ren Tang, China's leading producer of traditional Chinese medicine, has invested HK \$150 million to set up a Hong Kong production base, with seven production lines due to be operational within the year, *China Business News* reported Monday.

According to Jin Yongnian, director of Tong Ren Tang's publicity department, the 11,700-square-meter site at Hong Kong Science and Technology Park will concentrate on producing Chinese traditional patent medicine, nourishment and health care products. The move is the latest effort by the company to expand its over-

seas market since it established Tong Ren Tang International Corporation in Hong Kong last year.

Liao Ziqiang, from the science and technology park's marketing department, told *China Business News* that the first phase of the base would go into production by the first half of 2005 when it will start to produce 140 varieties of export products.

Mei Qun, general manager of Tong Ren Tang Group, told Xinhua Sunday, "We are encouraged by relevant policies of the central government and the mainland-Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement."

Mei added that manufacturing in

Hong Kong might increase production costs, but the market advantages of doing so more than compensated for the financial disadvantage. He described Hong Kong as an excellent bridge to connect the mainland and international markets.

Tong Ren Tang's annual sales are reportedly above 5 billion yuan, however only 5 percent of this comes from exports. According to Mei, transportation costs are bound to increase with the company's expansion of overseas market and the Hong Kong base provides a workable and direct solution to the problem. Besides expanding the overseas market, medicines pro-

duced in the base will also be sold to the mainland.

On completion, the output value of the base is expected to be more than 400 million yuan for the first production year and 800 million yuan by the end of 2008. Moreover, half of the job opportunities created by the base will be provided for local Hong Kong residents.

The sales volume of exported products are expected to amount to 500 million yuan and foreign exchange earnings will reach US \$60 million by the end of 2005. Tong Ren Tang aims to achieve a sales volume of 30 billion yuan and a net profit of 1.3 billion yuan by 2011.

GE and Chint Cooperate on Machinery Production

By Sun Yongjian

The US-based GE Group is launching a cooperative venture with domestic Chint Electric Appliance Group to produce industrial machinery, according to a report in *China Times* Wednesday.

The two companies will jointly invest US \$5.86 million to establish a new company named GE-Chint (Wenzhou) Electric Appliance Co. in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, with 51 percent owned by Chint and 49 percent by GE.

The new company will produce more than 200 different types of industrial machineries, which can be divided into four categories, a GE employee surnamed Xu told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

New Meiji Lukang Pharmaceutical Plant to Start Production

By Pan Hao

Meiji Lukang Pharmaceuticals' new plant in Jining, Shandong Province, will start producing prescription drugs and animal-use antibiotics from April this year, according to the company's public relations department.

Meiji Lukang Pharmaceuticals is a joint venture founded by Japanese Meiji Seika Kaisha and Shandong Lukang Pharmaceutical Group in 2003.

According to Meiji Seika Kaisha's annual report, the company's 2005 medium-term management plan has set targets of 9 billion Japanese yen in exports from Japan and 11 billion yen in sales of consolidated subsidiaries by March 2006. Investing 3 billion yen to build a new plant in Jining was part of the company's efforts to boost annual sales as well as to capture a share of the growing market for medicine in China.

Suntory Acquires Shanghai Brewery

By Sun Yongjian

Suntory (China) Investment Co. has announced the company's acquisition of 74 percent equity in a domestic brewery, according to a report in last Thursday's *Beijing News*. The report did not identify the domestic brewery.

Ranked among the top 10 in the global 500 brewing industry, Suntory has also achieved top ranking in many market indications, such as brand recognition in the popular beer market in Shanghai and some neighboring cities, the report said.

Suntory's production and sales in eastern China in 2004 surpassed 360,000 tons and ranked No. 1 in Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, according to the report.

Gail to Buy Stake in China Gas Holdings

The Indian state-run gas transporter Gail will pay between US \$30 and 35 million to acquire a 10 percent stake in China Gas Holdings.

China Gas Holdings is licensed to set up city gas distribution projects in 42 cities in China and Gail can take up to 50 percent in any of the ventures.

Gail chairman and managing director Proshanto Banerjee says the two companies have signed a preliminary agreement for the deal, with formal proceedings to take place later this week.

Gail will take up to 10 percent of the Hong Kong-listed firm through a share subscription and has agreed not to sell the shares for two years.

China Gas also recently sold a 10 percent stake each to Korea Gas Corp., South Korea's major gas supplier, and City Gas, owned by Singapore's state-owned investment company Temasek Holdings.

(Source: CRIENGLISH.com)

Hong Kong Jewelry Company Heads North

By Pan Hao

"It is time for us to capture the mainland's jewelry market, and our long-term plan is to open 200 3D-Gold stores in the mainland by the end of 2010. We will establish four in Beijing this year, and we also target Shanghai, Harbin, Changsha and many other cities," Dr. Lam Sai Wing, Chairman of Hang Fung Gold Technology Group, was quoted as saying in *Beijing Youth Daily* Wednesday.

"Currently, there are only three 3D-Gold shops in the mainland, however our final goal is to operate 1,000 chain stores in 100 mainland cities," Lam added.

According to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 64 percent of Hong Kong jewelry companies that set up business in the mainland increase their investment, and 40 percent of Hong Kong Jewelry enterprises plan to enter the mainland market in the future.

China Greets International Merger and Acquisition Wave in 2005

By Sun Yongjian

Though China's leading auto maker SAIC's purchase of British auto maker MG Rover has stalled over permit difficulties, market analysts expect Chinese enterprises to be very active in international mergers and acquisitions in 2005, according to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* Sunday.

"Although China's international merger and acquisitions have achieved only 20 percent in the Asian area in 2004, they will play an important role internationally in the coming few years," Mark Xavier, manager of Global Acquisition Department of Lehman Brothers Investment Bank said in Beijing on January 20, according to the report.

The report also quoted Meng Liang, head of Morgan Stanley's China Acquisition Department, who made three points:

First, the reorganization and reform of state-owned enterprises is continuing and will be speeded up in the

coming one or two years. By doing so, the level of state-owned shares in the enterprises will fall, this is a necessary objective condition, Meng said.

Furthermore, many large domestic enterprises have gained greater competitive power since China entered the WTO. They hope for more cooperation with foreign investors to enhance their business and their competitive power.

In the meantime, some foreign companies hope to withdraw from some investments in China due to their unsatisfactory performance and the best choice for them is to sell their holdings to domestic enterprises.

Tao Dong, chief economist of Credit

Suisse First Boston, told *Beijing Youth Daily* that China's overseas merger and acquisition business will base mainly on two points: resource and brand.

Tao said the resource industry can be related to petrol oil, natural gas, mines, iron and steel, power generating company, as well as the production of auto, TV. China is a country that suffers from a shortage of resources, and her status as a world manufacturing center will exacerbate the shortage. In the meantime, the globalization trend of the world economy will create an emerging country market. Thus, it's very necessary for China to develop a resource industry.

Wang Peng, president of CCID Con-

sulting Company Limited, pointed out that three necessary factors cannot be neglected, namely choice of industry, the mutual merger of capital and integration after the acquisition.

He said that the greatest difficulties related to international merger and acquisitions concern the different background and cultures of the enterprises. He put forward four suggestions: the target of the merger and acquisition must be defined, the rule of the acquisition must be well learned, the role of the specialized institutions must be noted, and the risk control mechanisms must be given due consideration.



Changyu Wine Group, with a history of 108 years, announced yesterday it has signed agreement with Illva Saronno Investments, selling a 33 percent stake to the Italian company for 481 million yuan.

BOC to Establish Internal Risk Control Department

By Sun Yongjian

The Bank of China (BOC), one of the "big four" state-owned commercial banks, is preparing to set up a new department that will merge the current audit and inspection departments, in order to improve the efficiency of internal risk control, BOC spokesmen Wang Zhaowen told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

The bank has suffered a series of serious embezzlement cases in the last ten years, including the case of Wang Xuebing, the former board chairman who had accepted 1.15 million yuan in bribes between 1993

and 2001, the case of Liu Jinbao, the former vice board chairman of BOC Hong Kong, who was suspected of committing economic crimes and stood down in 2004, and the case of Gao Shan, president of BOC Harbin Branch, who fled abroad with some 600 million yuan last month.

The China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) issued an announcement on its website Monday stating that serious problems in branch administrations and risk control mechanisms have been exposed in a fraud case at one of the sub-branches of the bank in January.

HK Stock Exchange Considers Simultaneous A and H-share Listing

By Sun Yongjian

"The Hong Kong Stock Exchange is considering the possibility of simultaneous public offerings for A-shares in the China mainland stock market and H-shares in the Hong Kong stock market," president of the Hong Kong Exchange Charles Lee said Monday. Lee made the comments at the opening ceremony of the exchange after the one-week Spring Festival holiday, China News Net reported Tuesday.

"The rules of the securities administration must be revised if simultaneous public offerings are launched, because the new shares issuance programs and timeta-

bles are different between the mainland and Hong Kong," Lee said. But he added that he believed this was just a technical problem and that simultaneous public offerings could be expected within 2005.

Lee said he believed that more and more large enterprises from the mainland would be listed in Hong Kong in 2005. However the "big four" state-owned commercial banks' Hong Kong public offering must be realized only when their accounting standards and information disclosure have reached the international standard, thus, time for reshuffle is necessary.

CNPC Invests 27 billion in Expansion Plan

By Wang Shuang

The Chinese government has authorized China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) to invest 27.2 billion yuan (about US \$3.3 billion) in an expansion of Dushanzi Petrol-chemical Company, *China Business News* reported Wednesday.

The plan includes 20 suits of oil-refining devices and 12 suits of chemical devices, and is expected to be completed by 2008. It will China's biggest petrol-chemical project to date, and an important component of the Sino-Kazakhstan energy cooperative strategy.

On completion, the total assets of Dushanzi Petrol-chemical Company will reach 34 billion yuan, it will have an annual sales income of 26.2 billion and annual profit tax of 10 billion. A report in Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* on February 15 says the company's capacity to extract will increase from the present 6 million tons annually to 10 million tons, and the production of ethylene will increase from 220,000 to 1,220,000 tons.

The project also includes the completion of a 1,200 kilometer pipeline. So far, China has been unable to secure a single supply route of crude oil through an oil pipeline from Russia. A European economist commented, "If Kazakhstan finds more petroleum reserves, the Chinese government need not wait for Russia to reply. Meanwhile, the oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to China will develop the economy." It is estimated that by the beginning of next year, 10 million tons of crude oil could be transported to China through the pipeline from Kazakhstan. The amount will increase to 20 million tons by 2011. The main supply of crude oil of the expanded Dushanzi Company will rely on the pipeline in the future.

World's Biggest Polluter Shuns Kyoto

Kyoto, February 15 (AFP) – The Kyoto Protocol, the landmark treaty requiring cuts in gas emissions causing global warming, is to take effect with the support of 141 nations while being boycotted by the world's biggest polluter: the United States.

From 0500 GMT, the 30 industrialized countries which have ratified the treaty will be legally bound to slash output of greenhouse gas by 5.2 percent before 2012, with targets set for each nation based on their 1990 levels.

The United States pulled out of the treaty in 2001 in one of President George W. Bush's first acts in office, saying it would hurt the US economy. Australia is the only other major industrialized country to reject the treaty, which was reached in 1997 in Japan's ancient capital.

The Bush administration points out that developing countries such as China and India are outside the Kyoto framework, meaning that their growing economies would not face the same economic burden as the United States if it were part of Kyoto.

China, which is seeing double-digit economic growth, is by some forecasts expected to exceed the United States as the world's top polluter by 2020. Developing countries will be asked to make commitments in the next phase of Kyoto negotiations to begin later this year.

But even for countries that have signed on to Kyoto, meeting the goals could be difficult.

The Japanese trade and industry ministry has said that 11 of its 30 industries could fail to meet self-imposed targets aimed at helping Japan meet its legal requirement to slash emissions by six percent.

Analyst's Take:

There is no doubt that The Kyoto Protocol will have a far-reaching influence on China though we have not yet suffered from its pressure.

Resources are becoming more and more limited with

booming economic activities. Hence, it is necessary for all countries to coordinate distribution and use of resources.

Under the protocol, developed countries must take the initiative in reducing the output of greenhouse gas while the developing countries needn't undertake the responsibility immediately.

During the short transitional period, developing countries can benefit from the protocol. As the output cost of greenhouse gas in developed countries is 5 to 20 times higher than that in developing ones, the developed countries may be willing to transfer their capital and technology to developing ones in order to promote their energy efficiency and sustainable development capability.

China should make preparations for shouldering the responsibility required by The Kyoto Protocol. We should be aware that there will be no free resources and Chinese enterprises will have to attach more importance to investment and R&D projects looking into energy efficiency. As for consumers, products with low output of greenhouse gas should be the best choice when purchasing electronics or autos.

As The Kyoto Protocol becomes effective, China will also face some negative effects. For instance, developed countries may transfer those products with dense carbon content or high energy consumption to China. There is every probability that Japan will transfer some of its steel industry to China. However, projects involving such large scale investment can hardly be withdrawn from China within 50 years. China may be weighed down by such projects when it's time for the country to make commitments to the protocol.

– Pan Jiahua, member of the Research Center for Sustainable Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, interviewed by China Youth Daily on February 15

(Qiu Jiaoning)



Greenpeace activists call on the US to sign the Kyoto Protocol in front of the US embassy in Germany. The White House on Tuesday defended US non-participation in the protocol, stressing economic concerns. Xinhua Photo

Sumitomo Mitsui May Strengthen Ties with Daiwa

Tokyo, February 10 (Bloomberg) – Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc., Japan's third-largest bank, said it may strengthen ties with investment-banking partner Daiwa Securities Group Inc. to boost brokerage fees after an eight-year slump in lending.

"We've always been close and there is a possibility something may happen," Sumitomo Mitsui President Yoshifumi Nishikawa, said today after the Nihon Keizai reported the two Tokyo-based companies are considering a merger. "I know about the reports, but there are no concrete facts."

Sumitomo Mitsui and Daiwa formed an investment bank in 1999 that this year ranks ahead of Nomura Holdings Inc., Japan's biggest securities firm, as the country's No. 1 underwriter of stocks and bonds, data compiled by Bloomberg show. Daiwa's stock had its biggest rally since June, pacing gains by banks and brokerages on speculation about other possible alliances.

"It's the start of a huge trend," said Koshi Kumagai, who helps oversee about \$1.7 billion at HSBC Asset Management in Tokyo, which holds shares of Sumitomo Mitsui and Nomura. "Brokerages such as Daiwa are likely to benefit from being able to tap the customers of a large bank."

A merger of Sumitomo Mitsui and Daiwa "would help speed up consolidation

of the Japanese financial services industry," said Michael King, chief investment officer of Taiyo Pacific Partners LP in Monterey, California, which co-manages \$200 million of funds invested by the California Public Employees Retirement System.

The Japanese government introduced the change as part of its efforts to give lenders more leeway to sell new products.

"It's indicative of ongoing consolidation within the Japanese financial landscape," said Simon Davis, a fund manager in the international equities group at Boston-based Putnam Investments. "The brokers have been in the crosshairs of competition from online brokers and banks themselves so they need to do something."

Local Report:

The merger indicates that packaged financial services will soon emerge in Japan. Zhao

Xiao from the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council said that packaged financial services could provide comprehensive service to clients in one deal. It is a development trend of the global finance industry, but so far Japan is relatively backward in this field.

Japanese banks are attempting to replace revenue lost during an eight-year decline in lending. They started offering brokerage services at branches for the first time on December 1 after a rule change prompted several to seek alliances with securities firms. Analysts said a merger of Sumitomo Mitsui and Daiwa could work well at a time when banks are looking to expand their offerings. By joining with Daiwa, Sumitomo Mitsui would gain a full line of brokerage products and expertise in selling them.

"Bringing Daiwa Securities Group into the Sumitomo Mitsui Group makes sense," said Jason Rogers, a bank credit analyst at Barclays Capital. "They know each other well and they know what they are getting into."

Zhao Xiao said that there are still many problems in the Japanese finance system. China would prefer to draw on the experience of the US.

– China Business News, February 15, 2005

(Qiu Jiaoning)

Germany Calls for EU Tax on Airline Fuel

Berlin, February 14 (Financial Times) – Germany will this week step up pressure within the European Union for a tax on airline fuel to fund extra development aid, in a move that has already been criticized harshly by the airline industry.

Hans Eichel, Germany's finance minister, will raise the issue at a meeting of EU finance ministers in Brussels on Thursday, and is optimistic that "many member states who were previously skeptical [of such a tax] would now support the proposal", a finance ministry spokeswoman told the *Financial Times*.

She refused to confirm media reports that Germany was proposing a tax of 300 euros (US\$387) per tonne of fuel, adding 5-10 euros to the price of a one-way ticket within the EU.

Germany first proposed the tax on airline fuel at a meeting of G7 finance ministers in London earlier this month, as a means of funding a pilot financial project of the Group

of Seven countries to pay for immunization and new vaccines, especially in Africa.

The proposal followed suggestions by German and French leaders at last month's World Economic Forum in Davos for new taxes on international financial flows to boost development aid.

Jean-Claude Juncker, prime minister of Luxembourg, whose country holds the EU presidency, was expected to table the issue formally on Thursday, the spokeswoman said.

Mr. Juncker said after the G7 meeting: "Most EU finance ministers are in favor of a tax on kerosene." German officials acknowledge that Britain and Ireland, among other countries, have in the past opposed Germany's efforts within the EU to introduce a tax on airline fuel.

There was a strong chance of EU unity on the tax ahead of the G7 summit in July, she added.

Airline industry representatives said last week that a tax would raise costs and could be counterproductive by reducing consumer demand for travel to developing countries.

A senior German official argued that the tax would be limited to the EU, and was appropriate because airline fuel is currently not subject to tax.

The tax would also demonstrate that the EU was capable of introducing such measures. The US has already indicated it would not join such a move, the official said.

GM to Pay \$2B to Settle Fiat Dispute

Rome, February 13 (AP) – General Motors Corp. agreed Sunday to pay Fiat \$2 billion to resolve a contract dispute, allowing the US carmaker to divest its stake in Fiat's troubled auto unit and revise the companies' business relationship.

The agreement dissolves a five-year partnership between Fiat and GM, but does not entail a complete separation, they said.

Detroit-based GM will return its 10 percent stake in Fiat's auto division and the two carmakers will dismantle their joint venture that manufactures engines and transmissions. However, the companies will continue to cooperate on engine production, development of vehicle programs, and other fields.

The dispute centered on a so-called "put option" included in the 2000 agreement, which gave Fiat the right to demand GM buy the rest of the car unit.

Russia Bars Foreign-owned Firms from Key Tenders

Moscow, February 10 (Reuters) – Russia will bar foreign-controlled firms from taking part in tenders in 2005 to develop major oil and metals resources, the Natural Resources Ministry said on Thursday.

The tender list includes the Sakhalin-3 oil field, which US ExxonMobil had planned to develop; the Sukhoi Log gold field, Eurasia's biggest; and the giant Udokan copper deposit.

"Companies will have to be at least 51 percent Russian-owned to take part in those tenders," Interfax news agency quoted Natural Resources Minister Yuri Trutnev as saying.

Apart from Exxon, a number of foreign companies have expressed interest in Russia's mineral riches, including Canada's Barrick Gold, Britain's Highland Gold Mining and Kazakhstan's copper monopoly Kazakhmys.

Verizon to Buy MCI in \$6.75 Billion Deal

Washington, February 14 (Reuters) – Verizon Communications Inc. said on Monday it would buy long-distance telephone company MCI Communications Inc. in a deal worth \$6.75 billion, giving Verizon a foothold in the market for serving large corporations.

The deal gives Verizon, the largest US telecommunications company, the muscle to compete against SBC Communications Inc. following SBC's deal to acquire AT&T Corp. for \$16 billion. It also spells the end of the independent long-distance telephone business in US, with local telephone companies such as Verizon and SBC firmly in control of their one-time rivals.

Verizon's bid, which beat out one by Qwest Communications International Inc., includes an exchange of stock valued at \$4.8 billion, based on Friday's closing prices, and \$488 million in cash. MCI will also pay dividends totaling nearly \$1.5 billion, bringing the total value to \$6.75 billion, or \$20.75 a share.

Verizon said it expects to reap savings and increased revenue with a net present value of about \$7 billion from the deal, due partly to cutting about 7,000 jobs at MCI. The companies hope to close the deal in about a year.

ONGC Still Hopeful of a Stake in Yukos

New Delhi, February 15 (Asia Pulse) – Russia's state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp. is still in the hunt for a stake in the confiscated assets of embattled Russian firm Yukos and said if the deal fell through it has the option to pick up equity in either Vankor oil and gas field in Siberia or one of the blocks of Rosneft.

"Yuganskneftegaz is not a closed chapter for us. Rosneft has secured a US\$6 billion loan from Chinese firm China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) to fund its acquisition of Yuganskneftegaz, the core asset of Yukos. Rosneft still needs more money for future projects," a senior ONGC official said.

Fiorina Gets Sweet Kiss Off

San Francisco, February 14 (Reuters) – Carly Fiorina, who was ousted last week as chairman and CEO of Hewlett-Packard Co., will have received \$45 million worth in stock options and severance pay on top of her regular salary and cash bonuses after five years at the company, a spokeswoman said on Monday.

The \$45 million is based on the current value of roughly \$23.5 million in previously awarded stock options and a \$21.4 million severance package awarded to Fiorina after she resigned last week.

The figure excludes a \$3 million signing bonus awarded in 1999, 5.8 million stock options at exercise prices above current share prices, and Fiorina's annual salary and bonus. Her salary averaged around \$1.2 million in recent years and she has received more than \$1.5 million in bonuses.

Liaoning Mine Explosion Worst in Decades

By Tian Yuan

Casualties from an explosion in Sunjiawan coal mine, Liaoning Province on Monday are now at 211 dead, 29 injured and 4 missing. It's China's worst coal mine accident in 50 years.

This coal mine is part of the Liaoning Fuxin Mining Group which has 3,100 staff. The explosion took place in the Haizhou vertical shaft of

Sunjiawan coal mine. It was already known to be a dangerous shaft because of the quantity of gas in the air.

Zhang Hongwei, an expert from Liaoning Technical University, said that the Liaoning Seismological Bureau had detected shockwaves just before the explosion happened. Seismological activity can sometimes trigger explosions as it can result in the sudden release of large quanti-

ties of gas.

After the accident, rescue efforts were swiftly arranged. It was important to resume aeration, power supply and drainage as soon as possible. As well as medical teams, about a thousand soldiers and policemen also participated in the rescue operation.

On Tuesday, the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety called on all coal mines to undertake careful

security inspections to find any hidden accident risks.

Last year, China's coal production made up 35 percent of the world total. But the death rate came to 80 percent, with more than 6,000 Chinese miners dying in accidents. Experts have strongly advocated that the country and corporations should combine safety efforts with the pursuit of profit.



Donors could get a present for their donation.
Photo by Jia Ting

Blood at The Temple Fair

By Lu Xiaonan

Mobile blood donation trucks were sent to seven temple fairs in Beijing during the seven days of the Spring Festival, including the Temple of Earth, the White Cloud Temple and the Dragon Lake.

Beijing Red Blood Center told *Beijing Youth Daily* that their storage of blood was below 20% of the normal reserve before the Spring Festival. In order to solve the problem, Beijing Red Cross Society decided to look for volunteer donors at the temple fairs.

There were four to five hundred volunteer donors on average for each day of the Spring Festival, almost treble the normal number. "Nearly 4000 units of blood (200ml per unit) were stored in Beijing Red Blood Bank by last Sunday," an official from Beijing Red Cross Society told *Beijing Youth Daily* last Sunday. "Among the 15 mobile trucks, 576 units were donated today."

Beijing Today even noticed young couples getting into the blood trucks on Valentine's Day at The Temple of Earth. "We think it is the most romantic way to enjoy today," said university student Chen Chen. Unfortunately, he and his girlfriend Zhang Di had caught a cold. "So the doctor advised us not to donate any blood. It's a bit of a pity."

Bank Official Turns Thief

By Zhou Ying

Liang Changjia, deputy security manager at the Agricultural Bank of China, Guigang branch in Guigang city, Guizhou province, robbed the bank of 750,000 yuan on Sunday, leaving one staff member dead and one cashier wounded.

According to *Nanguo Zaobao*, a local newspaper in Guigang city, Liang then drove to a remote district with the money, and then went back home to change out of his bloodied clothes.

When the security manager of the branch called Liang, he asked why the cash truck had not returned on time. Liang said he would call the police.

The local police told *Nanguo Zaobao* on Sunday that they went to the scene and arranged for the injured cashier to be taken to the nearby hospital. "Actually when Liang called the police, he did not know that one of the bank staff had died," one anonymous official said. He added that the wounded cashier told police at the hospital that it was Liang Changjia who beat him. The police quickly called a leader of the public security bureau to the scene and reported this to him.

According to the local police, Liang later confessed that he committed the crime out of retaliation. "I was not promoted last year, so I really felt unsatisfied. If our leader can become embroiled in this incident, then I will be happy," Liang told the police when he was questioned. The investigation is still under way.



Record Snow in the Year of the Rooster

By Wang Fang

Beijing had a second moderate snowfall yesterday in the Year of the Rooster following the first heavy fall on Tuesday. It's the most snow the city has seen in this period in 14 years.

The Beijing Weather Bureau told *Beijing Youth Daily*, "It is rare to see such heavy snow in Beijing after the beginning of Spring, a Chinese solar period." The experts at the Beijing Weather Bureau said the average snowfall on Tuesday in the downtown was 9.6 millimeters with the largest snowfall in the west of Beijing.

The snowfall in Mentougou and Shijingshan District reached 12 millimeters. The previous record snowfall at this time of year was 9.7 millimeters on February 18, 1990.

The day-long snowfall on Tuesday brought enjoyment to local residents, but also some trouble to the city's traffic system. Some expressways were temporarily closed and some flights were delayed. The local government called on 180,000 people on Tuesday to help sweep the snow using snow-melting agents.

Photo by Cheng Tieliang

Spring Festival Creates Economic Boom

By Zhou Ying

As China returned to work following the Spring Festival, various governmental departments, including Beijing Tourism Administration, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Commerce, and Beijing Administration of Industry and Commerce, released statistics about people's behavior during the holiday.

Beijing Tourism Administration revealed that more than 1,170,000 visitors from other provinces traveled to Beijing during the Spring Festival this year, 3.5 percent more than last year. According to the administration, the total income for Beijing tourism reached 1.8 billion yuan, ten percent more than last year. Hotels also did better business than last year.

The number of people traveling abroad also reached a peak this year. "About 32,000 Beijing residents went abroad, 15.4 percent more than last year," according to the administration.

Tourism was not the only industry in Beijing to take advantages of the Spring Festival. The food and beverage industry also experienced greater profits. According to a preliminary survey conducted by the Commercial Information Center, the revenue of 132 selected restaurants in Beijing reached 30 million yuan, 27.8 percent higher than last year. More than 1,100,000 people went to restaurants on Spring Festival eve this year, the survey revealed.

Bribes Not Accepted

By Lu Xiaonan

"Visitors may not enter bearing any gifts," a guard at the gate of the National Development and Reform Commission told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday. "Anyone carrying bags will be checked."

The National Development and Reform Commission adopted the regulation before the Spring Festival. As an important department of the government, many visitors were stopped at the gate during the festival.

"They didn't let me in, and wouldn't let anyone from inside come to fetch the gifts I had brought," a visitor was quoted as saying in *Beijing Youth Daily* on February 5.

According to the regulations of the commission, visitors should have their bags checked by the guard before entering. People with presents, even including flowers, would be blocked at the gate. Leaving presents at the reception desk has also been forbidden.

Some have said that this is an unnecessary measure in protecting against bribes. However, Xia Xueluan, a professor from the Department of Sociology, Peking University, believes it's a good idea. "Although giving gifts during the Spring Festival is a tradition in China, it can lead to bribes if officials receive the gifts," he told *Beijing Youth Daily*. "The National Development and Reform Commission deserves praise for executing this measure."



Gift givers were stopped at the gate.
Photo by Jia Ting

Don't I Recognize You?

By Tian Yuan

Mr. Wang came across his uncle Mr. Han outside the Ditan Spring Festival Fair on Monday. It was the first time they had seen each other in 32 years.

Mr. Wang was walking outside Ditan Park when he saw a group of people taking pictures wearing traditional Manchu clothes. After talking with them he was surprised to find that they were from his hometown, Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County in Fushun, Liaoning Province. They were in Beijing as part of a trip organized by a local art group to give some performances at the Ditan Spring Festival Fair.

Mr. Wang noticed that one of the performers looked just like his uncle. He then discovered that indeed it was his uncle, whom he had not seen for three decades.

Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County is thousands of miles from Beijing. Mr. Wang's family used to keep in touch with his aunt's family by telephone and mail, but they never had a chance to visit.

This was the first time Mr. Han had ever been to Beijing, but because their group had a busy schedule, he had no plans to visit his nephew. But after two performances that day, Mr. Han was allowed to go and visit his nephew's family.



Mr. Han is busy chatting with Mr. Wang's family.
Photo by Wang Zhenlong



Liu Qiyun and his fellow villagers rehearsing.

Farmers Record Their Own Story

By Tian Yuan

A group of farmers in Mengjinsi village, Ningjin County in Shandong Province are busy shooting their own teleplay telling the 600-year history of their hometown.

Liu Qiyun, 60, organizer of the project, used to record the history of the village and began to study it formally in 2000. He got the idea to shoot a teleplay when telling historical stories to the villagers. Ever since then, he's been busy conceiving the stories, collecting money, buying equipment and learn-

ing the techniques of making a TV show.

Liu's fellow villagers have ardently supported this idea, and many are spending all their spare time on contributing. To cut down expenses, they have to make costumes by themselves, and help the actors with make up. Liu Qiyun and his wife have undertaken the editing work.

Mengjinsi village has 465 villagers, 95 percent of whom are descendants of the Liu Family. The ten-volume teleplay will mainly tell the history of the Liu Family since its migration from

Shixia Village, Miyun County in Beijing from the Qing Dynasty to the present time. The changes of the village and residents' stories are also included. The farmers believe that it will show both ancient and modern faces of the village to the outside world.

The whole project needs a budget of about one million yuan, and Liu Qiyun and his wife have already contributed 310,000. Despite their financing difficulties, the villagers are resolute in continuing the project and are hoping to have it finished by the end of next year.

By Wang Fang

Firecracker booms rocked urban Beijing with bright flashes during this year's Chinese Lunar New Year holiday, challenging the city's 12-year-old ban on the festive but often dangerous explosives.

Even within the second ring road, at some of the innermost areas of Beijing, firecrackers were constantly heard, though posters reading "firecrackers forbidden" could be seen in nearly every street. On New Year's Eve, Beijing police sent out 130,000 policemen, market regulators and volunteers to patrol the urban streets to crack down on wanton firecracking, but the pyrotechnic display continued, particularly around the fourth and fifth ring roads.

However, most Beijingers seem quite used to such open defiance as it's been seen nearly every year since firecrackers were first banned in 1993. On New Year's Eve this year, nine people were taken into custody for illegally lighting firecrackers and they had to spend the whole holiday in detention. From New Year's Eve to the third day of the holiday, 522 people were warned for setting off firecrackers. On February 7, two days before the New Year, a man surnamed Zhao living in Fengtai District was killed by a firecracker he set off.

While Beijing maintains the ban, in the rest of the country, 105 cities have bowed to popular pressure and lifted the ban, including Shanghai and Nanjing.

Representatives of Beijing residents deliberated the calls for removal of the firecracker ban during their annual session in 2004. However, the local legislature eventually upheld the ban on safety grounds. On Wednesday, the Standing Committee of Beijing Municipal Government People's Congress announced that the "limited setting off firecrackers" was not listed in the 2005 legislation agenda.

For the Beijing government, how to balance between the nation's love for traditions and maintaining the law remains a tricky problem.

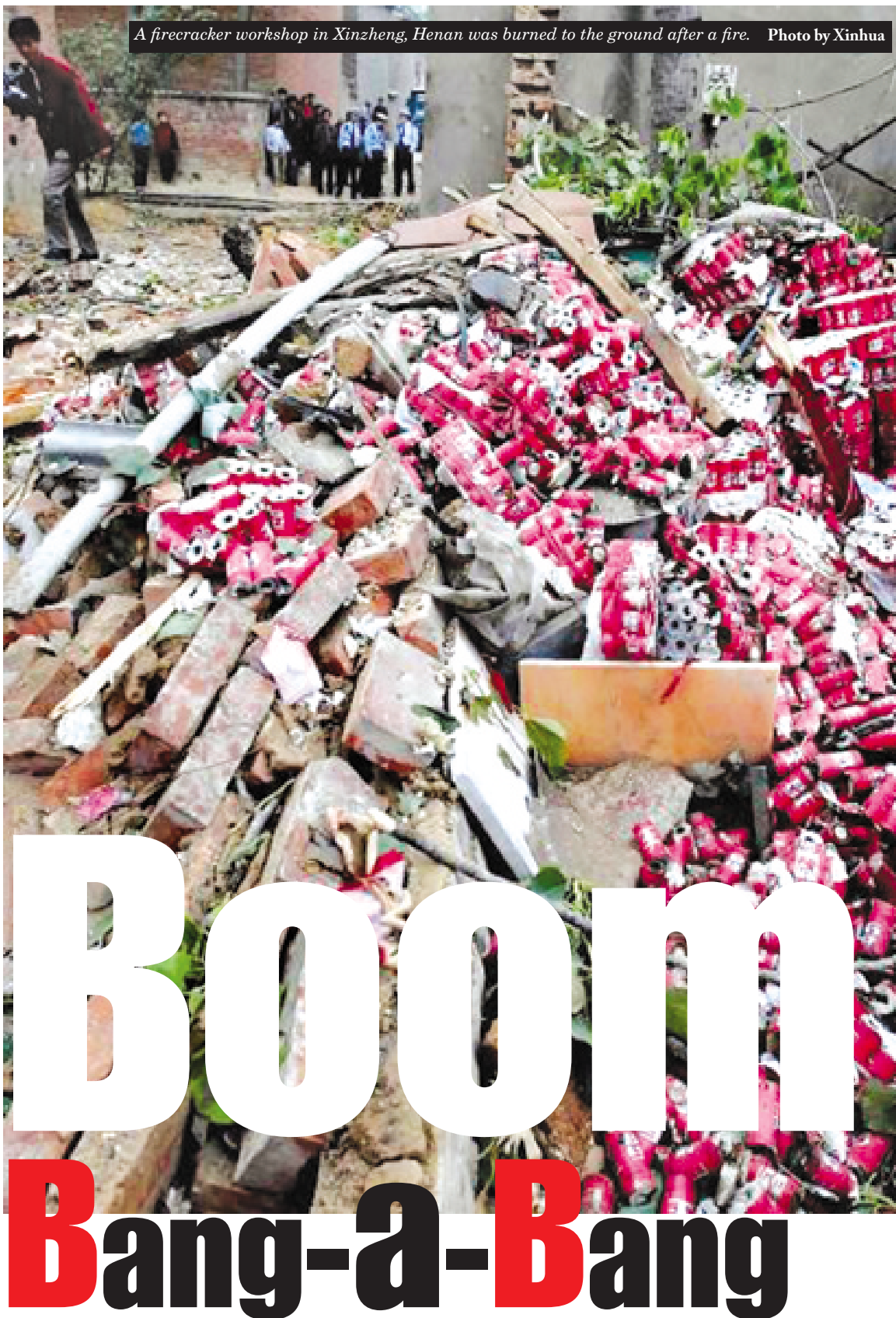
Ma Runjin, Deputy to Beijing Municipal Government People's Congress: **the government does not need to issue a law which is against people's will**

We can see that the number of temple fairs in Beijing is increasing every year and people love to spend their holiday there. It gives us a hint that people like to stick to the traditional customs since it defines who they are. Another example is the fact that clothes of a traditional Chinese style are back in fashion.

In contrast, modern technology is changing the way how people celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday. People find telephone and text messages are more convenient than visiting friends and relatives. In this context, more and more local residents want to light firecrackers to celebrate the holiday, to make it more bustling and fun. I think the government should be able to understand this.

Actually, Beijing can learn from Hong Kong regarding the firecrackers. We can also carry out an organized and limited way of setting off firecrackers. For example, the government can hold some big scale firecracker evenings or designate more places monitored by police in the downtown for people to light their firecrackers.

Zhang Zhongli, an attorney with Beijing Jiacheng Law Firm: **we**



Boom Bang-a-Bang

cannot ban everything that is dangerous

It can be dangerous to light firecrackers but we cannot ban everything that is dangerous. We cannot ban cars and buses to avoid traffic accidents for example. People living in big cities are complaining that the Chinese New Year is becoming less and less interesting than it was before. I believe the firecracker ban will make the situation worse.

Lighting firecrackers is a tradition rooted in Chinese culture for thousands of years and it is such an arbitrary decision to ban it. Why can't the government hear what we think when they make a decision which affects ten million people?

Wu Senzhong, Beijing resident: **when culture conflicts with other elements, culture should take priority**

Traditional culture is the reason for setting off firecrackers during the Chinese Lunar New Year. If an aspect of traditional culture is banned, we can't measure the loss. It is hard to say that it is the symbol of a modern society for no one to set off firecrackers. People still tend to follow and protect tradition even when society is marching forward. Lighting firecrackers is not against the concept of a modern society. The key is to have precautionary plans designed to face any possible problems, like injury, fire and noise.

Doctor Li, doctor on duty during the Chinese Lunar New Year's Eve in Tongren Hospital: **it's still dangerous**

I'm an ophthalmologist. If you ask my opinion of the firecracker ban in Beijing, I would say I firmly agree with it.

You've no idea how terrible the injuries can be unless you've seen a patient or witnessed some unfortunate experience. I've been working in this hospital for over ten years and every Chinese Lunar New Year is the busiest time for us to carry out emergency operations. Our hospital alone received 29 people injured by firecrackers between 6 pm on New Year's Eve and 6 am the next day. Seven patients were hurt badly and one man lost an eye.

Andy Lee, a Beijing student studies in Singapore: **it is about money**

Singapore is the first country to ban the firecrackers. On January 3, 2004, the Singapore Government removed the 34-year-old firecracker ban by arranging a number of police and firefighters. I doubt whether the local government has enough fund to pay for such cost when the firecracker ban is removed in Beijing.

Xu Huping, the curator of Nanjing Museum: **the removal of the firecracker ban is good**

This is a tradition handed down from generation to generation, that the booms of the firecrackers mark the passing of the old year, or "guonian" as the Chinese call it. The Chinese Lunar New Year has the longest history of our holidays, and more cultural elements

than the May Day and the National Day holiday. It is also the holiday which Chinese all over the world will celebrate together.

I have been appealing to the Nanjing government to remove the firecracker ban for years. This year, ten years after it began, the ban was finally removed, and this was welcomed by local residents. As to the safety issue, I believe that if the government can manage it well, firecrackers need not hurt anybody. We should not ban firecrackers just because they can be dangerous; as is implied by the old Chinese saying, "stop eating for fear of choking."

Chen Yi, 85-year-old Nanjing resident: **the lifting of the firecracker ban in Nanjing brings more damages than benefits**

I backed the firecracker ban ten years ago and I still hold the same opinion. Stories about explosions at firecracker workshops are often seen in newspapers at the end of year. And injuries still occurred even when the firecrackers were banned in Nanjing. The noise and air pollution brought by the firecrackers are loathsome. Ask anybody living in Nanjing whether they slept well on New Year's Eve; I guess 90 percent of them would say no.

When I walked out the next day, I could see stains and waste left by the firecrackers in the street. It is a pity but it is true that Nanjing becomes dirty and ugly because of the firecrackers.

Are Traditional Festivals Fading?

By Xu Chuanmei

For China's young people, major holidays are golden opportunities for finger exercise: sending text messages to their friends and relatives. This past Spring Festival was supposed to be a most important time for exchange of text messages. But a 27-year-old postgraduate student reported to *Beijing Today* that she received less text messages on the Spring Festival than she did on Christmas Day last year. She is not the only one who feels a decrease of enthusiasm among people celebrating the Spring Festival, let alone other traditional festivals. In contrast, some Western holidays appear to be rising in importance among young Chinese people.

Other countries have experienced similar situations, brought on partly by the sweep of globalization. Many in China are becoming concerned about losing the sense of tradition and cultural identity embodied in traditional festivals and holidays.

On February 14 and 15, an international conference on traditional festivals and national holidays was held in Beijing by the China Folklore Society and the Beijing Folklore Museum.

There were 43 delegates in attendance, including 33 Chinese scholars and 10 international experts. *Beijing Today* interviewed some of the delegates, who expressed concerns about the preservation of traditional festivals, while some suggested ways to reinvigorate them.

Liu Quili, President of China Folklore Society and researcher with the Institute of Ethnic Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: **the designation of more official holidays may help preserve traditional festivals**

Festivals and holidays are subject to two major influences: the government and the general public. The influence of the former is reflected in administrative orders, while that of the latter is due to tradition and customs. Some festivals have lost their popularity partly because people don't have enough opportunities to enjoy them. Such opportunities include official holidays; if people have to go to work on the day of a certain festival, then that festival tends to lose its importance, the Winter Solstice for instance. As to the fact that some Western holidays have started to be celebrated here in China, that's partly because people see them as occasions to express their emotions, such as Valentine's Day. Our traditional festivals need better promotion. The government has already realized the significance of this issue, and sponsored research projects on how to preserve our national character.

Chen Lianshan, Associate professor with the Department of Chinese Language and Literature of Peking University: **public events may help preserve traditional festivals**

My impression is that traditional elements are increasing. For the past couple of years, more and more public events, such as temple fairs, have been held during the Spring Festival holiday. I think those festive events help maintain traditional holidays. One of the reasons why people feel the Spring Festival has lost its festive flavor is improvement of living standards. New clothes, good food and lucky money are not as prized as they used to be, since people can afford to have new

clothes and delicious food whenever they want it.

Jang Jang Sik, Director of Skill-learning Research with the National Folklore Museum of South Korea: **the government should help with preservation of traditional holidays**

Traditional festivals are part of our intangible cultural heritage. During the process of urbanization and industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s, much of the traditional culture of Korea was damaged. As an effort to preserve our culture, since 1965 the South Korean government has enforced a law promoting the preservation of cultural heritage. Still there is a big problem: the enforcement of official holidays based on the solar calendar have affected the popularity of major traditional festivals, except for the Lunar New Year's Day and Harvest Full Moon Day. I think a diversity of factors should be considered when official holidays are designated.

Bakhtina Valentina Aleksandrovna, Senior Researcher with Gorky Institute of World Literature, Russian Academy of Sciences: **Russia is embracing both traditional festivals and foreign holidays**

Talking of adoption of Western festivals, Russia's situation is similar to China's. Today's young people in Russia celebrate Valentine's Day without the slightest idea of who St. Valentine was. According to the traditional Russian calendar, Christmas Day is on January 7, but many Russians celebrate Christmas on both December 25 and January 7.

Alain Arrault, Director of the Beijing Center of the French Far East Research School: **tradition is often more powerful than it seems to be**

I don't think traditional holidays are losing their popularity. Big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai don't represent the whole of China. For many people it doesn't matter whether or not they understand the meaning of a holiday. What really matters is the fact that they celebrate it. Celebration itself is very important. Some festivals may disappear, but then after a period of time they might revive. An example is the Fire Festival in France, which was absent for over 30 years but in recent years people have started to celebrate it again. Tradition has its own way of evolving.

Michael Owen Jones, President of the American Folklore Society, professor at the University of California, Los Angeles: **changes are inevitable and festivals are dynamic**

At the conference I've heard comments that folklorists should work with local communities or the government in order to preserve traditional festivals. I've heard objection to the government's changing holidays. There are a variety of opinions, but with globalization it's inevitable that there will be introduction of new holidays. People like to celebrate. Some traditional holidays are perhaps becoming less popular, but I don't think that means they are going to die out. Festivals are not static, fixed phenomena. People give various meanings to festivals - when they participate in a festival, they have a variety of reasons. Festivals are changing over time, so you can't make it static. All of us lament the loss of tradition, but that doesn't mean we want to go back.



International experts at the conference

Photo by Yang Ying

"We believe the Lebanese people must be free to express their political preferences and choose their own representatives without intimidation or the threat of violence," *State Department spokesman Richard Boucher* said in announcing the imminent withdrawal of US Ambassador to Syria Margaret Scobey on Tuesday, to express America's "profound outrage" over the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri who had protested Syrian influence in his country.

"We have been calling on the United States to join. But the country that is the world's biggest emitter has not joined yet, and that is regrettable," said Japan's top government spokesman, Chief Cabinet Secretary **Hiroyuki Hosoda**, as the Kyoto global warming pact went into force on

Wednesday, imposing limits on emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases scientists blame for rising world temperatures, melting glaciers and rising ocean levels.

"I am satisfied with the results because it is clearly the decision of the Iraqi people. Its decision is to support the Islamic factions...this is democracy," said Iraqi Interim Prime Minister **Iyad Allawi**, a secular Shi'ite, in Baghdad, after Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, a Shi'ite politician and former exile emerged as the front-runner to become Iraq's new prime minister on Tuesday.

"In my entire life, I have never surrendered to threats and I have no intention of starting now. My own personal safety does not affect me and doesn't affect my plans," said the 76-year-old Prime Minister

Ariel Sharon on Tuesday, noting that he was unbowed by death threats from opponents of Israel's planned pullout from the Gaza Strip. He reaffirmed his intention to coordinate the move with the Palestinians.

"This is what I'll always remember: the way they fought. There were men without hands, men without legs, men without feet, men that were blinded. They were catching hell," said **Allen L. Pope**, who risked his life and limb to fly covert CIA resupply missions to besieged French forces in Vietnam in 1954. Next week, the seven surviving American pilots who braved those perilous skies will be awarded the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, or Legion of Honor, France's highest award for service, by the French government.

(Edited by Lene Chau)



The Lenovo office 15 years ago

and 418 were female (13.9 percent). Their average age was 43.4 years; 51.8 percent had received a college education; 14.6 percent had lower than junior middle school education (the theoretical compulsory educational minimum in China).

Before they ran their own business, their careers were rich and colorful. According to the survey, enterprise owners come from all strata of society. Most had held more than one job before they opened their own enterprises. However, the majority were former officials, intellectuals and former employees in state-owned enterprises. Notice-

rious problem for private enterprise owners.

According to information provided by 1,382 enterprise owners, in 2003 they paid 1.1 billion yuan as tax, but also paid almost half as much again in other charges imposed by local governments. According to data provided by 1,554 respondents, they paid 1.45 billion yuan as tax in 2003, plus a further 246.6 million yuan as a "public communication fee" to maintain good relationships with various governments.

The report concluded: "Compared with the tax value, we can find that those charges imposed by government and 'public com-

Private Enterprises Greet the New Age

Private enterprise was a pariah in China until very recently. The private sector only acquired legal status in China's constitution in 1998, yet today it stands as an essential pillar of the country's economy. The State Administration for Industry and Commerce calculates that by mid-2004, China had 3.34 million private enterprises, employing 47.14 million people with total capital of 4.2 trillion yuan.



A Sculpture in the lobby of the Lenovo, Lenovo is now one of the largest private enterprises in China

Photos by Lenovo

By Dong Nan

The All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce last month released the results of a survey of China's private enterprises and their owners, revealing important details about the sector and the dilemmas it faces.

Rapid Growth

By mid-2004, the number of private enterprises in China had multiplied more than 33 times over 10 years previously; registered capital had soared by a factor of 61, while the number of employees was up more than 12 times.

In 2003, the gross product of private enterprises stood at 2 trillion yuan, while they generated retail value of 1.06 trillion yuan. That same year, 74,443 private enterprises were involved in export business and earned foreign exchange equal to 174.968 billion yuan.

The scale of private enterprises had also grown. At the end of 2003, the average private enterprise had 11.73 employees, 5.68 percent more than in 2001. As 2003 drew to a close, there were 1,156 enterprises with registered capital of more than 100 million yuan, 498 more than at the end of the previous year.

Positive Trends

"Private enterprises have been moving to cities from rural areas and towns," said the report, which found that a quarter of private enterprises were in China's largest four cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing and Guangzhou, which account for five percent of the Chinese population.

Tang Hao, vice-chairman of the Shanghai Federation of Industry and Commerce, ascribed

this trend to the wider availability of business opportunities and favorable policies and services in the big cities.

Many enterprises had paid attention to technological development, said the report. Almost 17 percent had their own patents, 30.8 percent had products designed and developed by themselves, while 42.3 percent had invested in research on new products and new technology. The average value of this investment was 300,000 yuan.

Most enterprises had a positive attitude toward China's entry into the WTO. A quarter of respondents said that to meet the challenge of international competition brought by WTO entry, they were prepared to unite with other enterprises; 21.9 percent said they would work to bring in advanced technology; 19 percent said they would begin or increase import and export businesses. However, 30.7 percent did not think about the problem, while 17.2 percent said they thought WTO was not relevant to them.

Two percent of respondents had invested overseas, and 0.3 percent had an overseas investment of over one million dollars. One percent of respondents had issued shares, 0.7 percent were preparing to go public, and 26.5 percent said they hoped to do so in the future.

Most respondents said they realized the importance of enterprise culture, which they defined as "improving the competitiveness of the enterprise," "strengthening the management," and "building a promoting system."

Private Portrait

Among the respondents, 2,581 were male (86.1 percent)

ably, 33.9 percent of them were communist party members.

Their average annual income was 202,000 yuan, 46.7 percent higher than in last year's survey. There was considerable polarization within the respondent sample: the 20 percent with the highest income earned 46.9 times more on average than the 20 percent with the lowest income.

Running one's own business is not an easy task, said the report. Respondents spent 11.4 hours at work every day on average; 9.4 hours were spent on rest, sleeping and other entertainment; and only 1.2 hours were spent on studying.

Most of the respondents were unwilling to recognize their privileged status - 88.9 percent of them said that their economic status was only "slightly above the average"; 87.9 percent said their social status was slightly above the average; 74.3 percent said their political status was slightly above the average.

Asked about the future, 87.8 percent said that their biggest wish was to run their business well; 75.5 percent said they wished to "build up a good image in life and to be a prominent person in society"; around 60 percent said they wished to "have a good relationship with others." Most of them said they were not interested in participating in politics.

Dilemmas and Problems

The survey found that various "unreasonable" charges and expenses, including items imposed by local government such as "sponsorship" and "support" and the "public communication fee" were considered the most se-

munication fees' were a great burden on private enterprises. There are still problems in the relationship between local governments and private enterprises."

There are also problems in the relationship between private enterprise owners and their workers. In 2003, the average annual wage of private enterprise employees was 9,043 yuan, down from 10,250 yuan the previous year. State enterprise employees earned an average 14,577 yuan.

According to statistics released by the State Administration for Industry and Commerce in past years, the annual wage of state enterprise employees has always exceeded that of private enterprise employees, but never by more than 20 percent since 1993. This time, however, the gap was around 60 percent.

Moreover, only one third of the respondents said they paid health and medical care insurance for their employees, 8.7 percent paid endowment insurance and 16.6 percent paid unemployment insurance.

The survey also found that only 14.5 percent of employees participated in health and medical care insurance programs, 22.7 percent had endowment insurance and six percent had unemployment insurance. Only 64 percent of employers had signed formal contracts with their employees.

Survey information

The report was based on a survey by the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce of 3,012 private enterprise owners (about 0.1 percent of the total number in China) and statistics released by the State Administration for Industry and Commerce.

Planners to Tackle "Urban Villages"



Urban villages in Shucun, Haidian District

Photo by Li Shuzhuan

By Dong Nan

It's common knowledge that Beijing Municipality includes rural areas and villages, but less well known is that there are still villages in what are now classified as urban districts. As Beijing spreads ever outwards, the number of these enclaves also grows.

According to statistics released by the Beijing Municipal Administration Commission this week, there are 343 such villages in Beijing covering 170,000 square kilometers (a little larger than the area of Xuanwu District), with a total population of 1.5 million.

The origin of these "urban villages" lies in the differing management methods adopted for urban and rural areas. For example, when some rural land is requisitioned for public construction or business development, the management of the companies involved does not arrange new accommodation for the local peasants. Having nowhere else to go, they choose to stay, building their own one-story homes to

form a new village.

According to the Administration Commission report, these areas are very dangerous. In most, the roads are narrow and crowded with many temporary buildings. In case of fire, for example, fire engines and ambulances would be unable to get through.

Moreover, around 60 percent of these "villages" do not have access to basic utilities such as water, electric power, gas and heating. Most of them do not have private toilets but instead rely on a few public toilets for a large population, causing sanitation worries.

The Administration Commission's report announced a three-year plan to bring the "urban villages" under control, although details of the plan remain to be filled in. The first stage targets the 231 "villages" in downtown areas. Since the work will involve compensation, employment issues, social insurance and other tricky topics, the report conceded a hard task lies ahead.

Henan Tops Blood Donor Table



Voluntary blood donors in Beijing

Photo by Xinhua

By Dong Nan

More than 90 percent of China's clinical blood supplies now come from voluntary donations, according to statistics released by the Health Ministry on February 6.

In 1998, voluntary blood donors only accounted for 22 percent of clinical blood. The Blood Donation Law that went into effect that year aimed to limit the practice of paying people to donate blood, and it has had a radical impact on the way blood supplies are collected.

Among all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, Henan Province ranks first with 100 percent of blood being supplied by volunteers. Next are Shandong (97.9 percent), Shanxi (97.84 percent), Ningxia (97.23)

and Liaoning (91.67 percent).

Beijing ranks 22nd in the list, with only 59.65 percent of blood coming from voluntary donations. Shanghai (28.72 percent), Tianjin (16.02 percent) and Tibet (0 percent) bring up the rear.

Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai make up for shortages in voluntary donations by taking blood from other provinces; in all other areas, blood shortages are made up for with paid donations.

A Health Ministry spokesman said that China would continue to encourage voluntary blood donations, and hopes that all clinical blood will come from voluntary donations within three years. The ministry will publish province-by-province blood donor data every six months.



Cai Haowen was captured on a train to Harbin.

Official Snared in Gambling Crackdown

By Zhou Ying

One of China's "Most Wanted" corrupt officials was finally captured shortly before Chinese New Year. Cai Haowen, who earned his place on the Ministry of Public Security's "A-list" by allegedly gambling away a large sum of public money, was arrested on February 6 by officers from the Jilin provincial department of public security. The department said Cai was caught on a train from Beijing to Harbin, the capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

According to the People's Procuratorate of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Jilin Province, Cai immediately faced questioning after his capture. Despite being fast-tracked, the investigation into his gambling activities is still ongoing.

Open and shut case?

Cai is a former director of the traffic and transportation department of Yanbian Prefecture. According to a *Xinhua.net* report, investigators say Cai embezzled 2.76 million yuan (\$332,500) from his department and another 750,000 yuan (\$90,000) from five companies under his supervision from January to November 2004. That same year, Cai allegedly made 27 trips to North Korea and squandered all the money in a local casino. He fled on November 19 in 2004, according to his former employer.

An official from the public security bureau in Yanbian Prefecture told *Xinwenhua Bao* newspaper that the anti-corruption bureau of the local people's procuratorate has already acquired plenty of facts and evidence, and the purpose of the inquiry was just verify specific statistics.

"The measurement of his punishment mainly depends on whether he confesses all his crimes faithfully," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The official added that Cai claimed he had tried to call the local people's procuratorate, but whether he was to be deemed to have surrendered to authorities remained to be decided.

Cai's alleged gambling extravaganza took place at the Emperor Casino in Rason, North Korea. The Emperor is owned by Hong Kong inves-

tor Yang Shoucheng, who is a big name in the entertainment industry. The island casino caters almost entirely to Chinese tourists, with North Koreans themselves banned from entering. Every day, more than 100 Chinese travel across the Tumen River to the neighboring Rajin-Sonbong Free Trade Zone to gamble at the casino, which was built in the late 1990s.

A former middle-school classmate told *Xinwenhua Bao* that Cai had become "greedy and conscienceless" since he became addicted to gambling. "He even used his brother's house as a stake," said the erstwhile school friend.

However, at least one official in the traffic and transportation department of Yanbian Prefecture told *Xinwenhua Bao* that he found it quite hard to believe that Cai had committed a crime. "He is re-

ally quite serious and careful in his post," the official said.

The head of the inspection office of the traffic and transportation department told *Xinwenhua Bao* that everyone working under Cai was enthusiastic about their work. "He concerned himself with everything, even trifles, and he was also quite strict with us. I have to say that he really did not neglect work even if he was addicted to gambling."

Gambling epidemic

A nationwide crackdown on illegal gambling and other criminal activities has inflicted heavy losses on across-the-border casinos that specifically target Chinese gamblers.

Wu Mingshan, one of the officials responsible for the crackdown campaign, told *Beijing Today* that most foreign casinos in border areas strictly prohibit their own citizens from entering. "Though 82 such casinos have closed down, in recent years many more have been established across the border in Myanmar, Russia, North Korea, South Korea and even Mongolia. These casinos now number nearly 200 in total," Wu said.

Deng Zibin, a researcher from the Supreme People's Procuratorate's Criminal Law Department, told *Beijing Today* that 50,000 of the 250,000 people who leave Yanbian for North Korea on tours every year are specifically heading for the casino. Deng estimates about 30 percent of those 50,000 gamblers are government officials or civil servants.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese Ministry of Supervision held a joint press conference on January 28, at which they announced sanctions against a number of officials.

Deng Yaohua, former deputy secretary of the Zhaoqing City Committee of the CPC and mayor of Zhaoqing in Guangdong Province, has been expelled from the Party. His executive post is the subject of legal proceedings.

Wu Huali, former director of the Public Security Bureau of Huizhou in Guangdong, has been removed from his post for frequently going abroad on gambling trips from January 2002 to March 2004. Further investigation into his case continues.

Yu Changliang, an official of the Housing Resettlement Office of Jinan in east China's Shandong Province, has been expelled from the CPC and removed from his office. The case has been handed over to judicial departments.

Yu was found to have embezzled public money and borrowed from businesses, individuals and financial institutions a sum totalling 5.6 million yuan (\$675,000) to gamble and repay debts incurred by gambling.

The press conference also named two other officials involved in gambling: Cheng Hong, former deputy director of the personnel and education department of the Postal Service Bureau of Jintan City, Jiangsu Province, and Wang Furong, former



The Emperor Casino where Cai gambled attracts many Chinese officials.

Xinhua Photos

director of a grain supply center in Rongcheng County, Hebei Province. Both of them were said to have embezzled public money to participate in gambling activities.

Liu Xirong, deputy secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, said at the news conference that gambling "infringes on the interests of the state and the people, impairs the image of the Party and the government, and corrupts the political and social atmosphere."

Liu called on various levels of party committees, government and disciplinary organs to strengthen investigation of and penalties for Party members and government officials caught gambling. In addition, he said an effective mechanism should be established to prevent them from participating in gambling in the first place.

Disabled Orphans Farmed Out to Families

By Wang Fang

A recent report on the experience of one northern Henan city has highlighted inadequate state provisions for the care of disabled children.

Puyang, a prefecture-level city of 3.5 million, does not have a single orphanage. Since 1997, the city's civil administration bureau has dealt with disabled children either orphaned or abandoned by their parents by placing them in the care of local families. More than 2,000 children have been placed in this way, but the results are largely unknown because there has been no follow-up.

Lin Fusheng, the official in charge of placing the disabled children, told *Democracy & Law* newspaper that the economic situation in Puyang was not good.

"Asking families to take care of the disabled abandoned children is the most feasible solution for Puyang," said Lin. "No one has ever assessed whether the policy is successful or in the best interests of the children."

The situation is set to improve at last this year. Wu Lingchen, secretary of the Communist Party Committee of the Puyang Government, told *Democracy & Law* that a new orphanage would be established in 2005. "At that time, these disabled abandoned children will finally have a place to grow up under the care of professional nurses," Wu said.

The civil administration bureau currently pays host families 350 yuan a month for each child. Lin said it was not possible to monitor how this money was spent. The standards for selection of suitable families are set by Lin personally.

Zhang Wenxuan and his wife Li Xiuge, both 56, were the first to accept Puyang's disabled abandoned children in 1997. Zhang told *Democracy & Law* that he could not remember how many children had been sent to him. "I could only tell you a rough number, which is about 100. The civil administration bureau send me children every year and 80 percent of them have mental disabilities. They cannot walk and eat by themselves. Some of them cannot open their mouths and so I have to use a syringe to feed them milk."

Zhang, Li and nine children currently live in a shabby 20-square-meter room. "I had 13 children last year. These children were the most disabled; the other four were taken away again by the civil administration bureau," Zhang told *Democracy & Law*.

"In the past eight years, about 30 children in our family died. These children were either badly disabled or on the verge of death when they were sent here."

Zhang told *Democracy & Law* the children usually have meat every 10 days, but sometimes it is only once a month. Breakfast is steamed bread, porridge, tofu and bean sprouts.

If a child falls ill, Zhang goes to the health center in the village to buy medicine as he says he can't afford to take them to hospital. He said, "The medicine is becoming more and more expensive. I spent about 500 to 600 yuan on Pu Mingui (one of his disabled abandoned children) in 2003 and I paid it from my own savings."

Zhang said that he did not have enough money to buy diapers for his nine children. When *Democracy & Law* visited on January 4, 2005, the reporter found that Li Xiuge sat the children on heated sand, spread some sand on their bellies and legs and then wrapped them up with a cloth. Zhang explained, "It is the way we were brought up in our hometowns. The heated sand can keep the children warm because we don't have a heater in the room. Moreover, when the sand is heated, it kills all kinds of virus."

Zhang said the money offered by the government was an incentive to start looking after the disabled children (from 1997 to 2003 the monthly stipend was 300 yuan). "In 1997, the place where we lived was flooded and life was very difficult. I thought I might be able to save some money if I agreed to bring up these children. Besides, I really have pity for these children."

"In the past eight years, about 30 children in our family died."

He Gets Around

By Hester Xu and Arron Chang

Changing up into fifth gear, Su Mingci stepped hard on the gas. His little 1.1L car began to speed up in the high-speed lane. Everything seemed so natural, it was hard to imagine Su is 65 years old and has driven the car for only two years. Su is the kind of person who enjoys life and every kind of pleasure to the full.

New fangled technology

Su used to be a senior editor for the Chinese Opera Publishing House and one of the things he takes a great pride in was the last big task he undertook before retiring: editing the third volume of The History of China's Peking Opera.

When the History of China's Peking Opera reached the last phase of editing in 1993, a 1.5 million-word manuscript was stacked on Su's desk. It might have been easier for him to do the editing in the traditional way with a pen. But thinking the manuscript was fragile and the work so valuable, Su hit upon the idea of editing the whole volume using a computer, which was only just becoming popular in China at that time. The use of computers was unheard of in the circles of traditional Chinese Opera literature. Having never used a typewriter, let alone a computer, Su volunteered to do some investigation. He bought a simple computer for 6,000 yuan



One of Su's joys is reading in his study.



Su and Peking Opera lovers gathered in Laoshe Teahouse in July 22, 2000.

The meaning of life

Su was introduced into the circles of Chinese Opera by pure chance. He was born into a cultured family, and both his parents were overseas students studying in Japan in the 1920s. His father majored in linguistics and education, his mother in oriental philosophy. Su admitted that his life was most influenced by his mother, evident in his name Mingci, which means 'wise and kind' and has Buddhist origins. Su was attracted to natural science as a boy and hoped to study it, but when he entered the third grade in high school, he caught tuberculosis and had to suspend his schooling for some time. When he returned to school, his teacher suggested that his illness had affected his study and he should consider arts instead.

During his illness, his mother had often taken Su to theatres to watch performances of Chinese Opera in order to cheer him up. He wanted to apply to the

on the same track. People began to scream and the train blew its whistle. Finally the freight train slowed down and a terrible accident was avoided. Telling his story, Su seemed perfectly calm. "The train was passing through lush mountains and green waters," he recalled. "When dusk came, the setting sun would paint the land red. It was such a beautiful scene."

In 1969, Su went to the so-called "May 7 Cadre School". A newspaper article published on May 7, 1966 had suggested that cadres and intellectuals should go to work in grass roots units in order to be re-educated by the working people, reformed through labour. Each time when Su went out to work, he paid attention to how the driver drove the tractor. Later on, a time came when no one could be found in the school to drive the tractor. Although he didn't know how to drive it, Su volunteered for the job, citing his experience of observing the tractor

hard to learn all of these, although it seems impossible for me to learn a foreign language now. I didn't miss the other two, though." Su learned some Russian at middle school and managed to learn some English in the 1980s. In the early 1990s when his children went to Japan to study, he tried to learn some basic Japanese in order to visit them. But he never could speak it properly.

Su's children always encouraged him to learn driving. But the old traffic regulations didn't allow people over 55 to learn, and Su was just over the age limit. So his wife learned driving first. As soon as she got her driving license, their children bought a small car for them. When the regulations were loosened in 2002, the 63-year old Su immediately went to learn in a driving school. He was the oldest student there. "Perhaps it was because I had driven a tractor before, driving wasn't difficult for



Su and his wife go diving in Sanya, Hainan Province in 2003.

Photos by Arron Chang

and set to work.

Su didn't learn from a teacher or go to a computer school. Instead he bought two computer books and learned everything at home. It took Su one and a half years to type in and edit the 1.5 million words on the computer. The musical score for the opera posed a small difficulty at first, as it required special software. But Su was soon able not only to input the score but also to edit it on his computer. Never asking for any reward from the publishing house for what he did, Su only wanted to do a good job. In October 1999 the third volume of The History of China's Peking Opera was published and Su happily retired the same year.

Su tried the Internet for the first time in 1996. Struck by the wonder of the cyber world, he became addicted to net surfing. Soon after finishing editing The History of China's Peking Opera in 1999, he built Liyuan Qu Yuan, China's first web page dedicated to Chinese Opera. Originally he built the site just to have some fun, but it became quite a success after a while, drawing increasing numbers of members. When the first gathering of these enthusiasts took place on July 22, 2000 in Laoshe Teahouse, Su was surprised to meet not only people from all over China, but also people from New York and other foreigners who love Chinese Opera. And their age varied from teenager to septuagenarian. It was the first such gathering of Chinese Opera lovers via the Internet in China.

For the second gathering, they went to Baiyangdian Lake on two rented boats. People on one boat played instruments and people on the other boat sang Chinese Opera. It was a joyful gathering, and since then Su has organized at least one gathering each year.

Chinese Literature Department of Beijing University. But when he saw the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera was recruiting students for the Opera Literature Department, he also gave that a try. Much to his surprise, Su was invited to enrol by both schools. He decided on Beijing University, but then he received a letter from them informing him that his enrolment was cancelled as he had already been accepted by the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera which enrolled students earlier. Feeling disappointed, Su wanted to wait for another chance to go to Beijing University, but his father said to him, "You can either live your life happily or live it as a series of endless complaints. It's not a bad thing to study opera literature after all, so why are you so unhappy?" Su heeded his father's advice and decided to devote his life to opera.

Su stayed on to work at the academy after graduation, and was to witness much turmoil. 1966 in particular was a year of turbulence and confusion. Su was sent on a working trip to Guizhou. There were no hard or soft seats on the train at that time, and all the cars were full of passengers sitting either on the seats or on the floor. Unable to find a place to sit or stand, Su climbed up on the luggage rack. The train wound through the high mountains along the way, and Su had to tie himself on the rack for safety. During the 32-hour trip, he only managed to eat one meal. In Chongqing, he witnessed a gunfight and had to hide inside the train. Passing through Shiwan Mountains, as the train was approaching a small station, the passengers suddenly spotted a freight train coming from the opposite direction and heading towards them



Su drives a tractor, plowing the ground, in Tianjin in 1972.

driver. He did reasonably well and kept the job.

Driving fun

Travel is one of Su's great passions. In the summer of 1981, when most Chinese people knew nothing about tourism and wouldn't have considered borrowing money to take the family on a trip, Su borrowed 200 yuan from a friend and took his young daughter and son to Qingdao. After spending several days there, they went to Yantai on a train and then went to Tianjin by ship. Finally they returned to Beijing on a long distance coach. In this one holiday, his children not only had a chance to travel but also were able to take several forms of vehicle. It served Su's purpose.

In 1988, Su took his children and his wife to Beidaihe by bicycle. Along the way, most people who saw them were surprised. They couldn't imagine that a 13-year-old girl could ride a bike from Beijing to Tianjin. Talking about this, Su still feels proud. On another occasion, when he went to Tibet on a business trip, he borrowed a bike right away and rode all around the city before altitude sickness forced him to dismount.

"I heard that Chinese people should master three essential skills in the 21st century: computers, driving and a foreign language," says Su. "I tried very

me to learn at all," Su said with a laugh. Having learned driving, Su decided to set off on new trips with his wife.

He didn't wait long. In the spring of 2003, Su and his wife joined a driving group for a fun trip to Guangzhou. Over 20 vehicles started off on the winding road, with four people in a car sharing the driving. Soon after leaving Beijing, they ran into a heavy rain which turned the road into a muddy mess, and rains struck again as they were leaving Wuhan, but they finally made it to Guangzhou. After that, Su and his wife went to Hainan. In Sanya, they went diving. Other tourists watched them in disbelief: how could two people over 60 still dive like the young people?

In the autumn of 2003, Su and his wife again visited the south, and they decided to drive back to Beijing. When they were approaching Fenghuang, they came upon a heavy truck in front of their car in the darkness. To make things worse, the truck was pumping a thick black cloud of smoke from its exhaust. Su was stuck behind it for the next 10 kilometers, his visibility was cut to little more than 10 metres. At first he thought the smoke came from a forest fire. After overtaking the truck he went to report it to the local public security bureau who had the truck intercepted for polluting the air.

In just two years, Su has travelled all over the country in his car. On the eve of this Chinese New Year, Su and his wife set off again in another driving group, bound for the Huangshan Mountain, Jiuhua Mountain and Tai Mountain, three of China's most famous mountains. And there are still plenty of places he hasn't been to, so Su aims to keep on travelling.

URBAN GRAFFITI Bombs China

By Sabu Zhang

One of the most eye-catching urban street scenes, graffiti first began blurring the line between “vandalism” and “art” in 1970s Harlem, New York, when street culture – hip-hop music and break dancing, was becoming a worldwide trend.

It originally started with urban gangs “tagging” walls to mark their territory, later, the practice of tagging became increasingly non-gang related. Graffiti artists would sign their “tags” simply for the sake of doing so and sometimes to increase their reputation as a “writer” or a graffiti artist.

Finely designed and delineated graffiti can be a piece of art, taking the form of drawings, or words, and it is also considered illegal vandalism when done without the property owner’s consent. Yet the risk involved in creating urban graffiti is all part of its appeal.

In China, graffiti is no longer a rare sight in urban areas. Local artist Zhang Dali’s sprayed outline of a bald head started appearing on walls all over the Chinese capital in 1995. In 1999, MIG and FBL – two of the most influential graffiti crews were formed in Guangzhou – a seed-bed of street culture and foreign exotica. Since then, many more graffiti crews have sprung up across the country. In Guangzhou, Changsha, Shanghai, Chengdu, Wuhan, young writers get together to try out their own forms of urban graffiti. They design their own logos and practice it on walls, doors, buses, sidewalks and intersections. Even the Great Wall has been “tagged.”

Chinese pros

Lin Zhu is a 20-year-old who first developed an interest in graffiti during the SARS period and later becomes a master in the field. She has designed graffiti logos for punk band Brain Failure and CD covers for DJ SK.

These days, most of her work is “legal,” but she still has fond memories of doing it on the street, “When I was bombing with friends in Guangzhou, it was the happiest time. It was like a hide and seek game. We would carefully plan our strikes, doing the bombing and photographing the work separately. I have only been caught once...” When talking about locations, she said, “It’s kind of hard to do it in Beijing, there is little room for bombing. These days I’m usually commissioned to do it. If there is any sponsor, that’s better.” Some works exist for

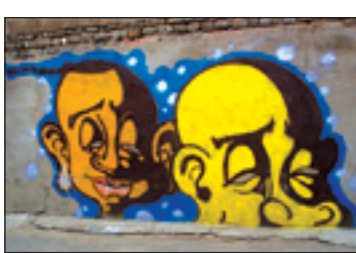


some time, while others disappear within one night. “Graffiti is much more common in Guangzhou. And writers there are doing good stuff, like FBL and MIG.”

SICE, known for the little flower added to her signature, founded MIG (Made In Guangzhou) crew in 1999 while she was still in high school, with SUE, and later added MAG, BSN and X2R. “I spent one year getting to know what graffiti is all about. Since no one could tell me, I just tried it out myself. I wrote my name on paper before I realized that was called a ‘throwup.’ When you bomb, you can simply write your name – ‘tag,’ or quickly write the outline or fill in of your signature – that’s called a ‘throwup.’ When you do a piece, you must use at least three colors, with outline, fill and effects for it to be considered finished. Bombing only takes a few seconds, while finishing a piece takes at least twenty minutes.” Seeing the detailed work in some pieces, it might be hard to believe it was done in



Graffiti in 798 Art District at Jiuxianqiao



Graffiti around Xijiekou.

Photos by Sabu Zhang

such a short time. “Twenty minutes is long enough for the cops to catch us. So you have to do it real fast,” says SICE. “We put our works in busy streets so that more people might see them.”

Bombing, hiding and running is like a never-ending game full of risks. Getting caught is common, usually they are obliged to have the wall repainted. But they don’t mind. “If graffiti would stay on walls, then it would not be graffiti,” says SICE.

“We usually bomb together at around 2 or 3 am,” says YAK from Changsha-based PEN crew, which includes four members YAK, RAY, LAN and SAIL. YAK, the oldest member of the crew at 21, explains they chose the name PEN “because ‘PEN’ means ‘spray’ in Chinese, and, aerosol cans are our ‘pens.’ Also

PEN stands for Paint Every Night. “When we do a piece, we need a safer place and more time, and more sprays. Sometimes several people work together on one piece.”

Recognized as the best crew in China, there are six boys in FBL (no violence) – YYS, SK2, JOKER, HEB, SUPER and GUESSII. Working closely with MIG, FBL is noted for dazzling 3D effects. Their websites show their works on walls and on the sides of mini buses. Now the three crews often get together to attend graffiti competitions and bomb around the country.

Art or Crime?

If graffiti is not a crime, will it still be so attractive? When the city becomes a vast canvas, is it worth taking the risk to decorate it? The problem seems not so great in China, for most people have no idea what graffiti is.

In many western cities however, graffiti is seen as a real threat. In the US and Great Britain, there are even codes enacted to combat the problem of graffiti vandals, which ban the sale of aerosol spray paint cans to teenagers and impose high fines on those who are caught. For graffiti hardcore SICE, the risk is always worth it, “Graffiti is a way of advertising yourself, you gain fame and express yourself at the same time.”

These days, the Internet offers many opportunities for writers to exchange views and promote their art works. Some crews have established their own websites to record their “actions” and display their achievements.

In August, 2003, FBL, MIG and PEN got together in Chengdu to create, legally, an unprecedented collective work over 40 meters long. Graffiti writers also now have opportunities to cooperate with big brand companies such Nike and M-zone.

“Graffiti is promising indeed,” Lin Zhu said, “As more people are involved we can grow together.” For graffiti’s own character as a rebel art, it will prosper as long as the new rebels find a way to express their enthusiasm.

PANDORA’S BOX OPENS WIDER

By Lene Chau

The history of sex in China has had its ups and downs and whilst some of it has been nothing less than sexy, some of it has been nothing less than downright dull. Sex, and matters coupled with it, have long been kept under covers, but a sea change in today’s attitudes can now be seen in a graphic new exhibition by ten new Chinese artists whose joint exhibition is currently showing at Beijing Art Now Gallery (BANG).

“China is gradually breaking away from its horrible stereotype,” says Huang Liaoyuan the owner and curator of BANG, “and the degree to which the Chinese are sexually open has reached a new level.”

In ancient China, sex and matters related to it was considered the essential and exclusive domain of the extravagant and hedonistic lifestyle of the aristocracy. Naturally, it was an all male club. For their own good, it was the less privileged, namely the poor and women, who were forbidden public access to the extent that there was even a ban on discussing sex openly, since it was considered that this could prove not only harmful to public morals but also capable of corrupting the poor and leading the innocent astray.

Yet even when aristocratic males who enjoyed their private “right” to pleasure discussed sex among themselves, they did so under a veil of euphemisms and symbols, finding this not only to be more interesting and appealing amongst themselves, but also a convenient way to keep the subject at arms length and concealed from what was thought to be the susceptible masses.

Consequently, classical era works of art with a sexual theme were mostly of the “Spring Palace Painting” type, erotic paintings created for private amusement. Naturally, the artists were all male.

During the Cultural Revolution, revolutionary fervor reached a great height and washed clean anything related to sex.

However, the last 20 years has seen massive changes and after the great waves of commerce and the rising of the sediment of popular culture, two things that were originally very basic to traditional Chinese culture, namely food and sex, have again found a new lease of life.

“That sex is do-able but not discuss-able is an old issue for Chinese,” says Huang, “I propose bringing sex to the fore of the media and the artistic stage, and to speak out about it freely.”

In the exhibition titled Clouds and Rain, a euphemism for “sex” in Chinese, this is exactly what Huang has done. The exhibition features works by ten contemporary Chinese artists, six female and four male, portraying a place where humor and romance are absent, forming a vacuum into which anx-

xiety, seriousness and cruelty rush in. Even optimism has been chased from this deserted palace.

Yang Qian’s bathroom window finds symbolic “service” in a telephone number; Ren Xiaolin has expanded the battlefield into the realms of heaven and earth; Jiang Congyi’s *Women in Uniform* exposes a contemporary psychological darkness; Shen Na portrays the blossoming of the gay/lesbian scene as a nouveau social trend; Zhou Nan presents advertisements for quiet and voluptuously charming girls; Cui Xiuwen modulates concepts of being hurt by despised love; Song Yonghong’s peeking perspective is numbing yet touching; Song Yongping’s pours out an endless expression of psychological

emptiness; Liao Haiying’s description of sexual objects resembles needlework while Wang Nanfei’s sculptures appear realistic precisely because of their exaggeration.

“When it comes to the sexuality issue, this new generation of Chinese artists is holding perspectives starkly different from those held by their forefathers,” Huang said. “Their thinking and their city-based experience allow them to stand independently.”

With blue sky and wild life running in the background and sad looking men and women in the foreground, Song Yongping’s hot spring series tries to capture the state of mind in the mid 90s in Taiyuan, an industrial city in central China.

“The city was badly polluted, blue sky and clear water was what people wished for,” says Song, “But in that environment, people were sick. I tried to show that people seek consolation in nature.”

Another piece shows two women, one naked, one semi naked, holding each other, standing in a barren landscape with dead animals on the ground around them, also a reflection of the depression people suffer as a result of pollution while touching on the underground thriving sex scene in Taiyuan.

“On one hand, people want to have a better environment, but on the other, they just want to have fun while they can, which is very contradictory,” Song said.

With a style of fashion design sketches, Shen Na’s oil paintings portray two lesbians. “We should hold an open and tolerant attitude toward sex,” said Shen, who is currently teaching at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute. “This should be represented in our mind and thought, not in behavior.”

As Zhang, a student from the Central Academy of Fine Arts commented after seeing the exhibition, “In China, sex is often distorted. These paintings have broken the taboo and discussed the social problems behind it.”

“Clouds and Rain” can be seen at Beijing Art Now Gallery until February 27.



Cui Xiuwen, One day in 2004 No. 3b, Photograph



Zhou Nan, Scent No. 1, Acrylic



Yang Qian, Portrait 13, Oil on Canvas



Song Yongping, Hot Spring 2, Oil on Canvas



What's New

By Tom Spearman
CD



Badly Drawn Boy: One Plus One is One

Damon Gough, alias Badly Drawn Boy, released one of the great debut albums in 2000, *The Hour of Bewilderbeast*, and has been struggling to match it ever since. The overriding sense on this latest album is of his desperate efforts to find the same inspiration. It's received mixed reviews, with critics noting the album's crowdpleasing production values, yet these fall flat in several of the more upbeat songs, the dreadful *Year of the Rat* in particular. It's a shame because there are some genuinely beautiful moments here, such as *Life Turned Upside Down* and *Take the Glory*. Some of the more negative reviews have pointed out the resemblance to previous folk rockers Jethro Tull and Nick Drake, but there's not necessarily anything wrong with that. The Boy just needs to rediscover his flair for nailing a killer tune. For believers in his talent, this is a frustrating release.

DVD



Closer

This should have been superb. Mike Nichols is one of America's greatest directors, with stagey classics like *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *Carnal Knowledge* on his resume. And for this adaptation of Patrick Marber's play, he assembled a mighty cast: Julia Roberts, Natalie Portman, Jude Law and Clive Owen. The film follows the troubled love lives and infidelities of four people who meet each other by chance. The play was famed for its biting wit and searing honesty, and, to be fair, there is one amusing scene in this movie in which Law and Owen visit an Internet sex-talk chatroom. The rest of the film is amazingly humorless, uninvolved and depressing. Some have blamed Roberts, saying she's miscast, but she's not the only problem. Law is whiny and unappealing, and Portman, playing a stripper, seems completely out of place. Owen is the only actor here who seems at home in the role, but even he can't save this movie.



DJ Shadow/Cut Chemist: DJ Freeze

Right on the line between supercool and supergeek, scratch-meisters DJ Shadow and Cut Chemist invite you into their world, both in rehearsals and performing at the El Rey Theatre in Los Angeles. Watch their scratch skills up close and observe as two small guys in green shirts bend over the decks and twiddle their knobs. The music is great, featuring new cuts of some of DJ Shadow's best loved tunes. However, the picture and sound quality on this DVD are a little disappointing. The picture isn't great on most music DVDs, but the sound is usually awesome, coming in various degrees of surround, while here it's just two channel. But it's a funky experience, nonetheless. Includes warm up sets from support DJs Marvski, Dante and Nu-Mark.



Dig that Funky Music



Photos by Tian Yufeng

By Pan Hao

To make all the audience laugh and applaud and to speed up the heartbeat appeared to be the main aim of Iron Beats last Sunday night, which was the fifth day of the Chinese new year.

Director Enrique Lugo comes from a background rich in culture. He is of Mayan and Aztec Indian and Mexican descent, as is the show. It is a dance and musical extravaganza, blending tap, Irish dancing, Malambo (Argentinian style), Flamenco, Latin rhythms and footwork, and stomp style percussion as well as street dancing. Excitement, fun and simple entertainment is the name of the game. The leading dancers were Joshua Allan Cyr and Gina Pero, and the show also featured talented artist Russell Hines and the heat-pounding rhythms trio, Sergio, Martha and Hilario Gaucho.

First off, Joshua Allan Cyr and Anthony Russo showed their tap dancing techniques, the clicks from their shoes tapping on the boards forming the main rhythm section. Though the style of the dance was not far from the original Irish version, they made some twists like adding more arm movements and clapping. The well-worn jeans and T-shirts they wore suited the raw power and energy of the performance. Russell Hines played a great electric bass, with his slapping style and groovy rhythmic bass line matching the tap dance very well. Hines later did a solo

slot, where he even encouraged one member of the audience to join him. It was a compelling performance and was really funny as well.

The Dancing Gauchos from Argentina introduced their mesmerizing staccato of drums and flurry of boleadoras - long strings with marble balls on one end. They waved the boleadoras into wheels, spinning around the dancers one minute and hitting the floor the next, contributing to the rhythm. It was not just dance, but drama and comedy as well.

The dancers would vary from Irish dancing to tango and salsa, then flamenco or street dance. In addition they used all sorts of items for the beats, such as metal bins, brushes, swords and whips, and even brooms. Music-wise, the singers did a few covers, including Dido's *Thankyou*, and took on Alien Ant Farm's version of Michael Jackson's *Smooth Criminal*.

Iron Beats was an entertaining show and fun to watch. If one or two of the performances were not to your personal taste, something else in the show was bound to please. But the most important thing was that it was the new year and people wanted something to cheer them up.

Spirit of the New Year

By Liu An

Following the "Lunar New Year Dramas" *Cui Hua* and *Ma Hua*, director Tian Youliang stages a new commercial comic drama *Dan Le, Jia Dian Er Jiu Cai Hua* for the beginning of this year. The audience experienced both laughter and tears during the performance at North Theatre, where the play will run until this Saturday.

Director Tian Youliang has been a pioneer in developing special Lunar New Year dramas, and has gained a high reputation in the field. "We try to show a kind of strength, to make the audience understand the spirit which the drama expresses, and get them to care and also be encouraged never to give up," he said.

The new drama is a bittersweet story about six young people living in Beijing. Lucy (played by Qu Ying, a famous model and actress), is a pretty woman who finds her-

self mired in poverty. Ma Jian, a young man with dreams of becoming a movie star, has applied to drama courses at universities in Beijing for three years but has been refused every time. The other characters are white collar worker Li Xiang and poet Da Lu and his little sister. They are all struggling to realize their dreams. They suffer various difficulties but never give up. They encourage and care for each other. Their friendship helps them face and overcome difficulties and make it in the modern big city.

The stage is decorated with IKEA furniture, and the modern home looks warm and comfortable, helping to build the atmosphere which the drama requires.

One lighthearted aspect is the connecting music between scenes, featuring popular mobile phone ringtones downloaded from the Internet. The audience enjoyed this part tremendously.



Photo by Huang Liang



Sky at Nameless Highland Bar

1979 at 13 Club

Photos by Demon.Q

Valentine Pogo

By Wang Yao

On this romantic night, a lot of clubs and bars arranged for some soft and relaxing music. At Nameless Highland Bar, four bands followed the theme.

Wave's Tale (Bo Lan Tong Hua) is a British-style band. They attach more importance to the beauty of the tune rather than fast rhythms. Their song *Waltz* was moving and people enjoyed the repeated chorus.

Sophie's Garden (Su Fei Hua Yuan), is also a British style band, but they have more of a grunge style to their music. Their performance was equally intense, but a little more downbeat rather than romantic. Their guitar player Ge Ning was pretty good.

ZIYO, a funk and jazz band, was the most popular act of the night. The leading vocalist, Hel-

en Feng, is an American born Chinese. She has been taught music since she was a little girl and she has built up an appreciation of American country music, jazz and funk. She could be another Celion Dion or Whitney Houston, because her singing is dramatic and skillful. When she began the song *Hate the Face*, she sang like a girl facing grey days, gravely and raucously. But she could also shift her voice into a more sonorous and classic mode. She made these changes smoothly and unexpectedly, listeners applauding and shouting their support. The song *Freedom Fighters' Drum* was a particular highlight.

The last band was an attractive pop rock outfit named Sky (Tian Kong). The band's five guys were quite handsome and had the appearance of a metal

band. However, their sound was more like pop music. Their tunes and lyrics were strong, and they used their instruments well, especially the guitar and bass, and the lead vocalist's voice was powerful. Their songs *The Distance We Have Covered* and *Compete With Myself* were energetic and optimistic, with a theme of perfect love and pursuing goals.

Even punk bowed to the mood of Valentine's Day at 13 Club in Wudaokou, where 1979 gave a performance reminiscing on innocent love. Bassist Ye Jing Ying is well known for his skills. In fact, the strongest point of the band is that everyone could be the vocalist. They covered songs of the '70s in a punk style, giving the old songs a new look. They also played their new-release *Zhang San's Song*.



Photos provided by Giordano & PepsiCola

Skill Shortage in Advertising Industry

By Xie Lixue

During 2004, the domestic advertisement industry earned more than 12 billion yuan, an increase of 15-20 percent on recent years. Several global advertising enterprises such as Dentsu and Ogilvy have already invested in China, and by the end of 2005, the sector will be completely open to foreign companies.

Experts predict that TV ads will see rapid growth this year, with fees doubling on some popular channels. The Internet, the fourth largest carrier of advertisements, is also expected to see a bumper harvest.

As a result, both domestic and foreign agencies are hiring large numbers of professionals.

Current situation

Because the advertising industry was a late starter in China, relatively few employees

graduated with professional certificates, compared with the situation in the US, where about 75 percent of advertising staff have a bachelor's or master's degree, according to a survey by the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 2003.

Currently, annual salaries for managers in the advertising industry range between 200,000 and 300,000 yuan in Guangzhou and Shanghai. However, without professional employees, the employers are hard pressed to provide creative and attractive work to clients. Zhou Bin, art director of Beijing Jiuhe Tongji Advertising, told *Beijing Today* that there were four kinds of staff working in this field.

"First are some people who have shifted from arts or management majors; second are experienced ones who have already worked several years; third are some non-professionals who have

an interest in it; and fourth are reporters who have client networks to sell ads."

He also pointed that besides the disadvantages of inadequate experience, professional people had problems such as narrow range of knowledge, little English proficiency and lack of creativity.

Scarcity of professionals

Rapidly expanding advertising companies can easily find willing employees with the attractive salaries they offer. But on the other hand, few professionals possess the expertise required to really excel.

Xie Yu, vice manager of Beijing Liangji Advertising said that competition in the industry has been fierce since 1995.

"There are more than 4,500 companies, but the general education level of staff is relatively low. So we would like to partici-

pate in job fairs and find properly qualified employees."

Xu Bo, manager of Beijing Zhanwangweilai Advertising expressed that many people have misunderstandings about this kind of work. To create an excellent ad not only requires artistic skills, but also understanding of the product, the original ideas and promotional channels. "With the entry of foreign companies, they desired to localize their style with Chinese professionals. So it's an opportunity for us to learn advanced concepts and at the same time cultivate excellent people," he said.

Education needs to keep up

Now, more than 210 universities and colleges provide advertising or related majors, and every year, over 2,000 graduates with bachelor's degrees enter the job market. But the demand of companies is high, and many

students with majors in computer arts and design can earn big money just working part time.

Xu said that although many universities had opened courses, there remains a wide gap between theoretical study and the actual business world.

Jia Yubin, vice director of the department of advertising in the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, offered several suggestions to universities and advertising students.

First, graduates should understand the rules and direction of the international market, and have strong communication skills. Second, upper-level managers who are sensitive and able to guide the market need to be developed. Third, graduates should know how to promote and sell. Fourth, they should be able to create and design by themselves. Fifth, they must be good at advertisement production.

Corporate HR:

Work Around the World With BP



J. Kent Hamby, HR vice president, BP (China).

Photo by Xie Lixue

By Xie Lixue

BP started business in China in the early 1970s, and from that time on, has emphasized cultivating local management staff.

J. Kent Hamby, vice president of human resources, BP (China) talked with *Beijing Today* recently, and shared his opinions and experiences of working here.

Beijing Today: Why does the company put green, innovation, performance and progress as its brand values?

Hamby: As an energy corporation, we put green first as our awareness of environmental protection. This is the key for the survival of the company and more importantly, of the world.

Innovation means to offer new products, from which BP keeps developing. While the people who perform actively in what they do and make progress when new business opportunities arise are the guarantee of the innovative products.

BT: You have worked in different places around the world, such as the US, Cairo, and Geneva, and now you are in China. What impressed you most about working here?

Hamby: Working in BP China, the most rewarding thing to me is that I have staff who are hard working, eager to learn, ambitious and open. It is so nice to see that many young people do their job with diligence, and they always desire to receive direction

and feedback that can make them perform better.

As a result, we promote our commitment to establish the local professionals very rapidly, which is our human resources strategy. Now we have 15 domestic senior staff leading the business, and I hope that in the future, they will move to other parts of the world and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds.

BT: So the senior staff have the opportunity to work abroad? And how do you recruit or decide on internships for newcomers?

Hamby: We have the regular ratio for the upper level and the new ones, and usually we hire 6-12 MBA graduates a year. More opportunity goes to the interns. We have firm connections with two universities, Tsinghua University and China Europe International Business School. The students there will develop as our formal staff if they can do their best during the internship.

In addition, the internship is not only open to students in China, but also to the Chinese who study abroad. This year, we have a girl who is studying master of business administration at Indiana University. We hope more students have the motivation to come back to China and work for this rapidly growing country.

BT: We know that the different culture background between you and your staff may cause some misunderstandings. Could you give us an example, and how you solve it?

Hamby: I remembered that one time we conducted a survey. When the paper returned, I found a girl wrote a list of what she had done wrong, and someone even used the word failure. Those really hit me. I wondered that were not there any positive points to demonstrate, why they were so critical of themselves. In my opinion, both the good and the bad comments in a balanced way can show the performance. Later, I learned it is the culture difference – the eastern people are inclined to pick up the mistakes and correct them to improve.



ChinaHR.com is the second largest job hunting website in China.

Photos provided by sina.com

By Zhang Nan

Monster Worldwide, the biggest and most comprehensive website for job hunting, announced that it had spent 50 million dollars on purchasing a 40 percent stake of ChinaHR earlier this month.

According to a *China Daily* report on February 4, the deal allows Monster to purchase up to 51 percent of ChinaHR's stake within three years of ChinaHR going public. China Business News also said that Monster would have three places among the seven-person directorate.

The US based Monster provides worldwide services on online recruitment, agency services, headhunting consultancy services and so on.

While Monster's business has developed slowly in the European area, it enters the Chinese market aiming at finding new markets



Monster Purchases 40% of ChinaHR



for development.

"Gaining a foothold in this key area of the Asia Pacific region represents another step in Monster's global growth strategy of entering foreign markets where significant current and future opportunities exist," Andrew J. McKelvey, chairman and CEO of Monster Worldwide, was quoted as saying in the *China Daily* report.

ChinaHR.com Holdings is the second largest online job company in China, after 51job.com, with hits exceeding 6 million per day. It provides more than 200,000 available job vacancies every day to meet people's needs; possesses more than 2.2 million resumes online. Its revenue reached 80 million yuan (US \$9.66 million) last year, according to a report on the 2004 online job market by Internet industry research house Shanghai iResearch.

Seeking Employment

Web design graduates are available for free internships in groups.

Call Liu or Tang at: 0311-3160000.

Email: luogq@heinfo.net
www.inhb.com

Laid-off workers are providing PC maintenance services such as system upgrade, virus detection and removal, data copying and recovering, system utilization and security. Please call: 6732 7217

Cheap webmasters available at your call. Whenever you have problems with your PC, contact Miss Yuan and Miss Jing at: 010-6281 7129, 6281 7127. Visit us at: www.dfit.com.cn

Webmasters wanted. Familiarity with the Internet, web page design and music composition software essential. Love of music useful. Contact Mr. Hu at: 6333-1671 ext. 8006.

A graduate of information management from Huazhong S&T University in Wuhan, sophisticated in C/C++, VC6.0, VFP, Access, SQL Server, Activex and software developing, familiar with Flash, Photoshop, Excel, PP uses. Also familiar with medical English and Latin.

Contact: 82728588, 13622751429
Email: waairu@sohu.com, sonx7@163.com

A self-motivated, patient, enthusiastic, active and diligent Beijing boy seeking a job as business interpreter, manager assistant, public relation representative, business service advisor, human resource official, office secretary.

Fluent English, excellent communication capability and command skills in computer.

Contact Yang Yang at: 13811243074
Email: ivan1339@sina.com

Situations Vacant

Vacancies available for English teachers and editors. You can do it part-time or home. If you are a native English speaker and will stay in China for more than three months, please contact: 62552834, 13381392538(julia), or email: caoyanqin008@sohu.com

A cultural media company wants to hire a foreigner for international business.

Requirements: male, British, long time in Beijing, love Chinese culture, stable, honest. Legal experience an advantage. Contact: sun198052@yahoo.com.cn

PC sale persons and repairers wanted. New graduates and veterans preferred. 800 yuan minimum monthly salary. Contact: Peng Yu, Tel: 010-6281 7569

A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.

Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.

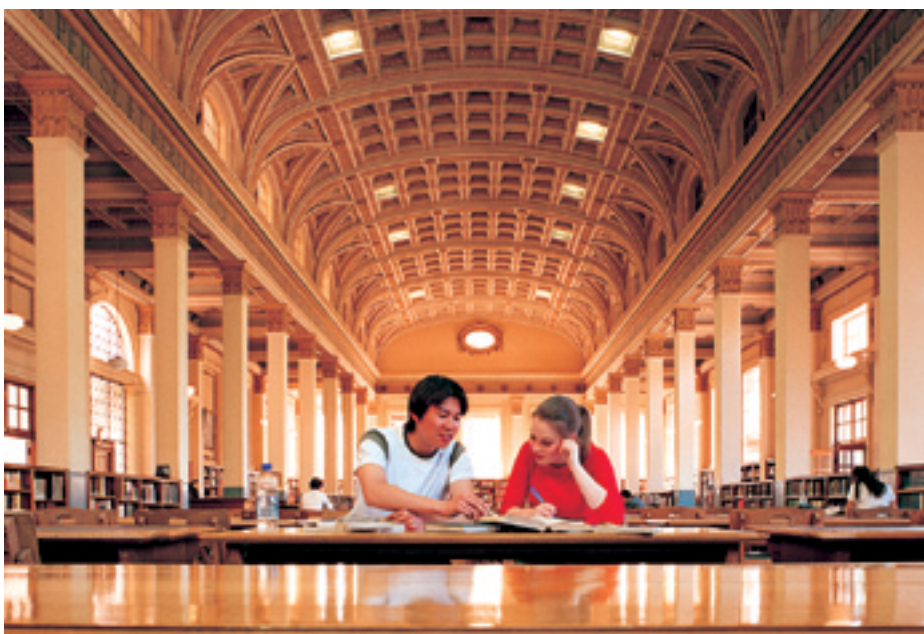
Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred.

Please send your resumes and writing samples to: hr@ynet.com

Adelaide: The Festival State Faculty



Splendid Australia



Reading room in the library



John Taplin, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide

University Basics:

Could you please tell me the history of your university? —telephone

The University of Adelaide was established in 1874. The academic dress for graduates of the University is modeled on that for Cambridge University in England. The University admitted its first female student in 1881, and now enrolls about equal numbers of male and female students in its academic programs.

What subjects are famous in your university?

—lily chou

The diverse areas of strength here include several national special or key research centers and range from biotechnology to reproductive medicine, from the application of geographical information systems to the study of developing economies, from water quality engineering and water resources management to agricultural and food science, from international law to international trade, from machine vision to human decision-making, and from population health to high-speed computing.

How many students do you have on campus? And how many of them are Chinese?

—yingying1204

We have just over 19,000 students altogether at the University of Adelaide. Of these, in 2004 708 came from China. The campus is very international: last year we had students from 88 different countries.

What are the popular subjects among Chinese students? —telephone

The most popular courses of study for international students, including Chinese students, are those which appear to be the most vocationally oriented. These include Business and Commerce, Information Technology, and Engineering. However, it is important to note that we have students from China enrolled in all of the major undergraduate and postgraduate programs at this University. Interestingly, the career outcomes are good irrespective of the degree taken. The University of Adelaide has been rated as a 5-star University for the positive outcomes achieved by its graduates. The best advice I can give you is to choose the course which is of most interest to you personally, and not to worry too much about what others are doing.

Study and Entertainment:

How many examinations should students take each term? Do most Chinese students pass the exams easily?

—magic girl

Students will typically take 4 courses per semester, although this may vary slightly from one program to another. In each course it is usual for there to

The University of Adelaide is one of the oldest and most reputable universities in Australia and features among the four top universities chosen from a comprehensive Australian government survey of university students.

The university has an outstanding academic record, having cultivated Nobel Prize winners and eminent scientists, producing not only the first video-telephone in the world but also Australia's first astronaut.

Recently, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide, Professor John Taplin, participated in *Beijing Today's* "Splendid Australia" event, a series of online chats with representatives from Australia's "Group of Eight" universities.



Bonython Graduation Hall

Photos provided by the University of Adelaide

be more than one kind of assessment. For example, students may be required to submit written reports of the laboratory work that they have done during the semester or to write an essay on a given topic that involves quite a bit of reading in the Library. At the end of the semester, students will typically be required to sit a final examination of approximately 2 hours duration per course. The questions on the examination paper may be multiple-choice, short answer or essay type.

Does your university pro-

vide scholarships to undergraduates? Or does your university only give graduates and doctoral students scholarships? —greentea

As you have guessed, most of the University of Adelaide's scholarships are for postgraduate students. However, we do have some partial scholarships for students from China who are transferring to our Bachelor of Engineering or Bachelor of Computer Science programs. Scholarships may also be provided for students enrolling in other undergraduate degree programs

(e.g. the Bachelor of Commerce), although their availability is subject to Faculty approval. All scholarships are awarded strictly on the basis of academic merit.

Can you introduce the library of your university? —greentea

The Library of the University of Adelaide is called the Barr Smith Library after the benefactor who helped to establish it many years ago. It is unquestionably one of the best research libraries in Australia, and subscribes to a very comprehensive collection of jour-

nals covering all fields of science, medicine, engineering, etc; many of these journals can be accessed electronically these days. The Library also has an extensive collection of books, around 2 million. The Library also has a number of special sections - rare books, international newspapers - and also caters for students with a range of disabilities, even those with visual impairments. Further, the Library includes a substantial array of electronic data bases and specialized search engines.

Are there any entertainment activities, communities or facilities on campuses? Can students use these facilities for free? —tears

The University of Adelaide has a wide range of student societies and groups, whose activities range from theatre, music and sport as well as loads of other social and cultural interests. Access to these various activities is either free or subject to a very small fee once you are enrolled as a student.

More generally, the University is centrally located in the capital city of South Australia, which is widely known as "the Festival State". We have many festivals throughout the year, including the biennial Festival of Arts, which is said to be one of the top 5 festivals of its kind in the world.

Relationships with China:

Do you have any relationships with Chinese universities, such as joint programs or student-exchange programs? —JackieZhang

The University of Adelaide has a comprehensive network of relationships with many Chinese universities and research institutions. These include the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In Beijing, we also have signed major agreements with Tsinghua University in particular, and also with Nankai University in Tianjin. In the north-east, south-east, and other parts of China, we also have partner universities.

We have student-exchange programs with the University of Hong Kong, and have also received scholarship funding to support exchanges with Tsinghua University and Shandong University this year.

Do you have any agent here in Beijing? Can I forward my application documents to them directly? I am afraid of the complicated procedures of applying. —gorrila

I can understand the reason for your question - lodging an application is a complicated process. However, excellent help is available in Beijing. You can contact Ms Catharine Ren, who is employed by the University of Adelaide there. Catharine is a marvelous person and I'm sure you will find her very helpful. Her contact details are:

tel: 010-67082062;
fax: 010-67082541;
email: catharine.ren@idp.com

If you are located at Tsinghua University, you can also contact Tina Wang at the Center for Overseas Academic and Cultural Exchanges. Her contact details are:

tel: 010-62789435, 62795579;
fax: 010-62788504;
email: hedh@tsinghua.edu.cn

(Edited By Zhang Nan)

Ask Ayi:

Q: I am a junior English major and preparing to study in the UK, but I have trouble deciding on my major. Could you give me some advice?

A: At education exhibitions, many English majors feel it's hard to further their study abroad. In fact, they have many directions and choices, such as linguistics, literature, English education, TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) or related areas such as humanities, communication, economics and sociology.

Linguistics is a good choice. The application range varies from language teachers, translation, social linguistics and linguistic computation, which can all lead to good jobs after graduation. Also there are some fellowships linguistic students can apply for.

Education and communication seem more attractive, because the domestic market for those two fields needs lots of professionals with expertise, and therefore you can easily find an ideal job after returning.

Q: My major is Arts Design. I know that some European countries have better design courses; could you introduce some universities for me? What about the expense?

A: Every country has its own strong design courses, for instance, architectural design in Italy, industrial design in Germany, costume design in France, visual design in the UK and cartoon design in Japan. You can choose any of these country according to your major and interest.

In France, you have to learn French in the first year and pass the language test. Fees, including the language course and living cost, range around 100,000 yuan per year. If you study in a public university, there is no tuition fee and only 50,000 yuan for living is required. In the Netherlands, the cost is around 160,000 yuan and in Denmark or Finland, it is only 80,000.

(Edited by Xie Lixue)

Beijing Schools to Open Overseas Branches

By Xie Lixue

A group of nine Beijing high schools has been awarded a groundbreaking license to set up operations abroad this year.

Song Lijun, chief director of the department of international educational exchanges of the Beijing Municipal Education Commission, told *Beijing News* that the move took account of the growing trend towards cooperation with foreign schools. Many Chinese high schools are preparing to apply to establish branches abroad in order to expand Chinese language teaching and help domestic students to receive further education in foreign countries.

"Now is the time for us to explore and develop in other countries," said Song, who described three principal modes of cooperation envisioned: first, the branch schools may offer a mix of foreign and Chinese courses while only awarding Chinese qualifications; second, they may offer only foreign courses and award foreign qualifications; third, they may offer both Chinese and foreign courses and leave students free to take either foreign or Chinese qualifications.

The group includes Huiwen High School, Luhe High School, No.12 High School, the high schools affiliated to Capital Normal University and Renmin University, and Nilunshan No.1 High School.



University library



The river in front of the university



CIGARETTE CASES FOR GIRLS

By Wang Yao

Now that Chinese girls have come out of the smoking closet, accessories to match are available at 77th Street, Xidan.

Metallic cigarette cases come in two models: long and thin and foursquare. They are illustrated with vivid but cool prints of pop singers, film posters, cartoon characters, rock stars and abstracts. Inside the case, there is a mirror for making up and a printed lighter that is wind-resistant and doubles as a flashlight. (25 -35 yuan)

Fans of retro chic can abandon the lighter for matches stored in colorful boxes printed with all kinds of patterns, from oriental legends to Indian Buddha images and Arabian leaders and tribes. The matchboxes are also processed with the same vivid sheen as the cigarette cases.

Even the cigarettes themselves can be customized to help smoking look cool rather than a filthy, smelly habit. The shop takes orders to reproduce designs from the cases and matchboxes on cigarette paper.

Where: No.111, B2, 77th Street, Xidan, Xicheng
Open: 9 am - 7:30 pm



Super Shoes

By Wang Yao

Supermodel's collection of imported shoes ranges from the Mongolian and Korean leather boots to Fin, Long.com, Levis and other international brands. The shop also features cotton slippers for wooden floors, plus outdoor and sports shoes in at least 11 brands.

The cotton slippers are designed as casual wear. Thick fleece cuts pressure on the instep, while the outer design imitates some fashionable leather shoes' designs, making the slippers resemble shoes for dancing or shopping. The in-

ners are lined with wool for comfort and warmth. (28-88 yuan)

Slippers especially for children are also available. These are stuffed to created three-dimensional images of film heroes like Spider-man and Shrek. The Spider-man slipper is entirely covered with a web effect, while to ensure warmth and help prevent the child throwing off the slippers, the designer has sewn a pair of cotton socks into them. Other models feature cartoon cars and Finding Nemo characters. (50 yuan)

Extensions for boots are another feature of the Super-model collection. The extensions are dyed in an array of colors, while many are trimmed with fox and rabbit fur. They can be matched with short-cut shoes on chilly days or laced on top of thin boots to increase warmth and add an extra touch of style. One of the most popular is a black pair that nevertheless takes a bit of patience to lace up. (300 yuan)

The sports shoe collection features super-light running shoes imported from



Photo by Wang Yao

Europe. (500 yuan)

Outdoor shoes here are mainly Salomon, VGG and Vans. Hundreds of styles are available.

As spring is approaching, Supermodel is currently offering discounts on winter shoes.

Where: No.a23, B3, 77th Street, Xidan, Xicheng
Open: 9 am - 7:30 pm



PIPE DREAMS

By Wang Yao

Some local smokers are turning on to the unmediated rush of pipe tobacco, and the pipes themselves are increasingly in demand, both for use and as collectors' items.

Hundreds of pipe styles are on display at Jia Yi Fashion Square. Most of them are made of basswood, Chinaberry and rosewood. Owner Xie says the quality of the material can be judged with a quick tweak of the pipe stem.

Traditional pipes are made of walnut wood. They are unpainted, therefore a light brown color. The traditional style, longer than a man's hand, looks larger than any others in the stand. Xie told *Beijing Today* that most of his customers enjoy collecting this kind of pipe as a home decoration. Because of its material, the trad pipe produces a special mild smoking feeling, with a comforting blend of the leaf's taste and the wood's aroma. (360 yuan)

A simpler style is greatly appreciated by white-collar workers, according to Xie. This one has a long, thin stem and the container is round and polished without any ornamentation. The pipe is made of Chinaberry and painted in dark brown. The long thin stem is light and is easy to hold. But because the stem is longer than others, said Xie, it may lessen the flavor of the leaf. (230 yuan)

Remembered Popeye's pipe? The container is round as a sticky rice ball and the stem is thin as a straw. Unlike others, the stem is not straight, but curly. The pipe is very small, only as long as a man's middle finger, and therefore convenient for girls' use; it's also a pretty one for people who likes Yunnan leaves. (230 yuan)

The smallest pipe of all is as long as a man's thumb. Its container has a filter mantle (others' filters are simply a mesh of small holes), and the stem is wide and short. Xie said that the stem passed the most powerful smoking experience to the user. This mini-pipe is made of basswood. (300 yuan).

Where: opposite No.713, Jia Yi Fashion Square, Chaoyang
Open: 10 am - 9 pm



By Wang Yao

Hairpieces have grown up. No more an embarrassing quick-fix for graying locks or balding pates, the once-derided wig-top is now top-dog in the Beijing fashion parade.

It's a role-player's dream. A cascading sheen of pure white screams "Barbie!", or to older readers perhaps snickers "70s Bond girls" or "female knight-errants in ancient China". Local Coldplay fans are flocking wigwards as you read. Rainbow pigtailed reaching to the waist raise eyebrows: Is it a punk? Is it a hippy? Is it Cyndi Lauper?

Much of this avant-garde



BEIJING WIGS OUT

fiesta of follicularity is defiantly retro, but with a 21st-century twist. Jackson-5 era afros have been recast into eruptive fireballs of tightly curled pink, green and purple. Then there's always the "Ronald McDonald" look, or a pink-and-black combo that aims to alchemize 30 years of fashion crimes into a

triumphant statement of pure punk!

Where: No.201, Jia Yi Fashion Square, Chaoyang (diagonally opposite the You Yi Shopping Center/Beijing Lufthansas Center)

Open: 10 am - 9 pm

Photos by Demon.Q



Personal Classifieds

Accommodation

Furnished commercial/residential apartment of 106 square meters for lease. Free parking, the apartment is located on the 3rd floor of a five-star hotel within northwest fourth ring road, close to shopping malls, banks, supermarket and restaurants. US\$1,000 per month plus utilities and deposit. Contact: Jennifer, 8844 7480, 13693189800, Email: chouhwa@yahoo.com

Brand new luxury 3-bedroom apartment of 180 square meters for rent. Located in CLASS Community, Wangjing, and 8 kilometers from German International School. Brand new decoration, currently without furniture, ideal for the expatriate tenant to accommodate their antique Chinese furniture collection. Will equip furniture if required by tenant. US\$2,000 per month plus US\$120 for underground parking lot, available from January 2005. Family or long-term lease and non-smoker are preferred. No agents. Contact: 13801133854, email: janeing@sohu.com

Language Exchange

Nine-year-old Beijing girl who has been studying English for four years would like to search for a native English-speaking girl in Beijing to make a friend and practice English. Alternatively, she would like to help her partner to learn Chinese. All inquiries are welcome. Contact: nzwilliam@163.com, 8621 4579

Professional Help

Candy, 23, a professional Chinese teacher, can speak German and English. She is especially experienced in Chinese courses for German speakers. Contact: 13810438396

Vacancies available for Executive Assistant, must be proficient in MS Office, fluent in English and with a college degree. Contact: Mr.Zhang, bestmastersh@163.com

International environmental organization seeks highly motivated, competent and experienced Chinese national to work on project development and implementation, member relations and other duties. Excellent spoken and written English is required. Interested parties should send their CV to: iucn@iucn.org

Disclaimer: Beijing Today does not take responsibility for verifying the authenticity of the personal classifieds and thus Beijing Today does not guarantee the accuracy, integrity or quality of the content. All content is the sole responsibility of the advertiser.

Music



100 Stars Anti-Piracy Concert

The stars includes Jay Zhou, Lee-Hom Wang, Coco Lee, Kelly Chen, Andy Lau and Faye Wong, also Cui Jian, Na Ying, Yu Quan Group, Song Zuying and Liu Huan from the mainland. The same day, representatives from the Audio and Video Company, consumers, stars and writers will set up a China Anti-Piracy Fund and will declare a China Audio and Video Anti-Piracy Pronouncement.

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 54 Baishiqiao Lu, Haidian **When:** 7:30 pm, February 26 **Admission:** 280-1,080 yuan **Tel:** 6833 5552

Performances

Swiss Béjart Ballet

The legendary Maurice Béjart will bring his famous Béjart Ballet Lausanne to Beijing as part of his 2005 World Tour. Audiences in Beijing might still remember the Béjart Ballet from their last tour in 2001, and this time the company will present an extravagant program with four enthralling dances: *Seven Greek Dances*, *Adagietto*, *Fire Bird*, and *Bolero*.

Where: Xizhimenwai Dajie, Xicheng **When:** 7:30 pm, February 25-26 **Admission:** 180-1,280 yuan **Tel:** 6835 4455

Drama: Marco Polo

Performed by the Paris Opera Theatre Children Glee Club, this is an important part of the France Culture Year. The show will later tour to Shanghai and Nanjing.

Where: Tian Qiao Theater, 30 Beiwai Lu, Xuanwu **When:** 7:30 pm, February 24 and 25 **Admission:** 60-600 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6300

Spring Festival Evening

The China Broadcasting Art Troupe



performs a stage version of the annual TV spectacular. If staying at home and eating *jiaozi* wasn't enough, get an evening of song, cross talk, modern dance, Peking opera and more to celebrate the turning of the year.

Where: Ethnic Cultural Palace Theater, 49 Fuxingmennei Dajie, Xicheng **When:** 7:30 pm, February 23 **Admission:** 80-480 yuan **Tel:** 6605 2404



Jams

Judge Jules

Since the late 80s, Judge Jules has been rocking the set, both with his BBC Radio 1 show and in the clubs as a trance DJ renowned for his impeccable mixing skills. Check him out at Banana this month and stick around for the Ting after party featuring local faves Usami and Patrick. DJ Spark from Hong Kong opens the set.

Where: Club Banana, Scitech hotel, 22 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **When:** 11 pm, Saturday **Admission:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 6526 7979 ext. 33

Drum n' Bass, Beijing Style

Join the city's premiere collection of Drum n' Bass DJs and MCs for this monthly meeting of the beats machines – DJ Elemental, Slide, the Syndicate and more grace the decks with their skitterish beats and patois rapping.

Where: Alfa Bar, 5 Xingfu Yicun, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm, Saturday **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6413 0086

Exhibitions

Spring Arrives, Flowers Open

Featuring bright swathes of color in traditional yet modern aesthetically pleasing images that inspire hope for new beginnings and other themes associated with the New Year. Works by Zhang Jianbo, Fang Xiang, Dong Ze, Zhuang Xiaolei and others.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Lu, Chaoyang **When:** February 18 – March 13, daily 10:30 am – 8 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570



The Rhythm of South China

Liu Chunming blends traditional ink wash style with his modern depiction of women in Southern China. He portrays women in a soothing, appreciative way, seeing them through a misty lens of classical beauty. Their personalities, firmly rooted in today, still shine through.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1 E Enjoy Paradise, Huawei, north of Beijing Curio City, Chaoyang District **When:** February 18-28, daily 9 am – 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

Exhibition of Guan Yuliang's Works

Guan Yuliang's works have met with admiration from all quarters. Not only are they ac-



claimed by his fellow countrymen, but people in Western countries and Southeast Asia have also collected them. His works belong not only to China, but to the whole world.

Where: National Art Museum of China, 1 Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** February 18-28, daily 9 am – 4 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 6401 7076



Contemporary Artist Chang Jin's Personal Painting Exhibition

The exhibition displays traditional Chinese paintings that reveal the changes of the artist's personal style over the years. Chang's early creations are characterized by a combination of openness, loneliness and simplicity.

Where: Soka Art Center, B-101 Tianhai Shangwu Dasha, 107 Dongsu Beidajie, Dongcheng **When:** daily 10 am – 9 pm until February 28 (closed on Sunday) **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8401 2377



Group Show at Wan Fung

Featuring promising young and older artists including Song Di, Feng Linzhang, Shen Daohong, Hu Yongkai, Huang Youwei and Lao Dao.

Where: Wan Fung Art Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** daily 12 am – 6 pm, February 21 – March 15 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6523 3320

Movies



Letter from an Unknown Woman

Actress Xu Jinglei's second attempt at directing is a story adapted from Austrian author Stephen Zweig's romantic novel of the same name. Beijing, 1948: A man receives a letter from an anonymous woman, written just before her death. In it she professes to have loved him for over 18 years and prompts the man to begin a quest for her identity. This film took the "Best

New Director" award at Spain's 2004 San Sebastian Film Festival and stars Jiang Wen and Xu Jinglei herself.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian **When:** until February 28 **Tel:** 8211 5566



Rosa e Cornelia

Directed by Giorgio Treves, starring Stefania Rocca, Chiara Muti, Athina Cenci and Poggio. In 18th-century Venice, Countess Cornelia is engaged but is secretly pregnant. Sent to her parents' country home to give birth, Cornelia is placed in the care of the

peasant Rosa, who is also pregnant. The two women find companionship, but must struggle when they learn about the plans Cornelia's family has for her unborn child.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm, February 24 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Peacock

Award-winning photographer and cinematographer Gu Changwei's directorial debut is a coming-of-age story of three children in a working-class family, living in a small city in the late 1970s. Gu worked as a cinematographer on Red Sorghum, Ju Dou and Farewell My Concubine. Peacock is slated to be entered into the 2005 Berlin Film Festival. Starring Zhang Jingchu.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian **When:** until February 28 **Tel:** 8211 5566

Beauty Remains

The story of two sisters struggling with – and against – the men in their lives. Stuck between the will of their late father and their shared love for

a charismatic ex-boxer, Huang, the sisters try to take control of their lives. Beijing director Ann Hu's second film was co-written by two American screenwriters as well as Wang Bin, who wrote the scripts for To Live, Hero and House of Flying Daggers. Starring Zhou Xun and Wang Zhiwen.

Where: Star City, B1/F, Oriental Plaza, 1 Dongchanganjie, Dongcheng **When:** until February 28 **Admission:** 70 yuan **Tel:** 8518 6778



Activities

Chinese Culture Club (CCC): Beijing Walking Tour

Visit a small lane (Dashilan'r) in the south of Beijing featuring shops selling opera costumes and props. It is said this lane is to be demolished soon, so take the last chance to view this old lane of Beijing.

When: 10 am, February 24, meet at CCC (29, Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District) to take bus **Cost:** 80 yuan (includes transportation) **Tel:** 6432 9341

Great Wall Hike

This walk is interesting and offers great views of the surrounding mountains, valleys. Huairou Reservoir, villages and other stretches of the Great Wall. As always with a Wall walk you will be hiking along an exposed ridge, there are rocks to climb and difficult boulders to navigate, and so ropes will come in handy at some tricky parts.

Where: Huairou County, north of Beijing **When:** Sunday, leaving at 8:30 from the Lido Hotel outside of Starbucks **Cost:** 150 yuan for adults, 100 for children under 12 **Tel:** 139 1002 5516



TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

18 Friday

Red Dragon 9 pm

19 Saturday

21 Grams 9 pm

20 Sunday

About Schmidt 10:55 pm

21 Monday

Striking Distance 9 pm

22 Tuesday

Mr.Deeds 8:25 pm

23 Wednesday

Last Man Standing 9 pm

24 Thursday

Cat in The Hat 9 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Culture Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Culture Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language-exchange and accommodation information for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2518

By Zhang Jianzhong



Potan County

By Shida Zhu

If you are tired of metropolitan life and wish to see something genuinely Chinese, and yet not travel too far away, coastal and mountainous eastern Zhejiang Province is a good choice and Xianju County (仙居) is the choice of choices, as it literally and actually means a residence of fairies. Enthrilled by the scenery, you might become one of the fairies, so to speak.

Potan (潘滩), 22 kilometers from the county seat, is an ancient hub between the Linjiang River and the western Zhejiang rolling areas. The foggy river, the river-side flat that lies silently before you and the mountains on the horizon form a picture that tells of long histories of evolution of this little river town of exquisite beauty.

Humans first settled here during the Xia period (22nd century – 17th century BC). When the total population in the county area was less than 10,000 during the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BC), settlers from the Xin'an Mountain to Tangkantou numbered more than 800, indicative of the strategic and business importance of the place. Irregular fairs came into being during the reign of Emperor Guanghua of the Tang Dynasty (898-901) and an officially run ferry crossing was established. The port of business came to its peak of prosperity in the late Ming and early Qing period when "businessmen from the eight corners of the world came to the Street of Dragon."

Most outstanding of all are the local houses that have withstood centuries of war and remain intact today. The houses are invariably enclosed with walls on the four sides and a roofed corridor makes a circuit. The front and back doors open to the outside world. The courtyard before the main hall is usually precisely square, covered with pebbles in totem formations. The bracket pendentives, the turned up eaves and the round and semi-round rain-water tiles are carved in bold relief or deeply embossed flower or bird patterns that are full of simple folk beauty. One may find here wooden architecture of the Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangxi styles.

Have you ever heard of a street built in a formation of a totem, more specifically a dragon? You will find one here. The 1.5-kilometer ancient street looks from afar like a lively swimming dragon. The dragon raises its proud head at the juncture of five mountain streams in the west, the body twists and turns in great vitality and the tail at last settles at Long Life Pond in the lower part of the street in the east. Houlu street and the ferry landing form the dragon's formidable claws.

Unlike other ancient streets in China, this

Have you ever heard of a street built in a formation of a totem, more specifically a dragon? You will find one here. The 1.5-kilometer ancient street looks from afar like a lively swimming dragon



Shuibutou, one of the five ferries in Potan.



Old streets take the shape of a dragon, paved with pebbles.



Bird's eye view of Wenling, Shitang County seat.

Photos by Cai Lei

one is covered with pebbles in the main street and side lanes in the gray patterns of a dragon. Walking down the street, one cannot help but be touched by the wonders of history and human endeavor. Each step brings a new surprise. The shop facades in complete traditional style are hung with signboards written in perfect calligraphic fluency. Connoisseurs of calligraphic art will be enthralled and enchanted by one signboard after another. The shops are separated in groups of three or four by a fire sealing gable, called *si jian feng* (四间封). Each shop brims over with its own individuality in this overall formation of dragon.

Behind the Clear Wind Building in the upper street is a group of houses owned by the wealthy He family, called He Shi Li (何氏里). With an area of more than six hectares, the compound is fronted by a huge gate with a gold painted board hanging over it. The threshold is made of stone, flanked by two stone drums. It boasts of, among others, studies, a library, a shooting range, an opium-smoking room, a back garden and an ancient well. Everything there shows the mark of wealth and prosperity.

A sign of importance attached to education, a long-standing tradition in the locality, is the Tongjiang Academy built during the Tang Dynasty. Built during the same period was the Wan'an Temple for the local Buddhist believers.

Don't miss the dragon dance

either on the Spring Festival or Lantern Festival. Dragon dancers make their way through one village after another in magnificent formations, accompanied by the beating of drums and gongs and a display of fireworks. The local people call it *ban deng long* (bench dragon, 板凳龙), *li yu tiao long men* (carp jumping over the dragon gate) or *quan di long* (ground-sweeping dragon). The names themselves give the dragon dance an awesome quality.

Local snacks have their own

bean curd is made of chrysanthemum paste (*doufu juhuanao*, 豆腐菊花脑). *Mazi* (麻糍) is a fried snack made of glutinous rice stuffed with bean cake, pork and pickled vegetable. You may also find something that looks very much like a Mexican enchilada. It is called *chai ye shi bing tong* (柴叶食饼筒). The thin wheat flour skin is stuffed with bean curd, soya bean shoots, sliced kelp and sliced pork and rolled into a pipe shape.

Getting there: Take a bus



The ancient city wall still encircles Linhai.

special flavor indicative of the long-standing civilization of the locality. Be sure to try *luse doufu* (green bean curd) made of tree leaves or tree fruits. It tastes a little bitter, and is claimed to be good for lowering the cholesterol content in the body and the elimination of harmful body heat according to traditional Chinese medical theory. Another type of

from Xianju, the county seat. The one hour trip costs about five yuan.

East of Xianju county is Linhai city (临海), lying in the middle of Zhejiang Province. It is accessible from Ningbo in the north, Jinhua in the west, Wenzhou in the south and the sea in the east. It has a land area of 2,200 square kilometers and a sea area of 1,800

square kilometers. It is an ancient city dating back to the Qin period, when it was known as Huipu township. It became Huipu county in 85 BC, and since the Tang Dynasty, it has been the prefectural seat of Taizhou.

Linhai boasts numerous ancient temples, streets and pagodas. Of these, the most outstanding and important is the 1,600 year-old city wall built during the Jin period. It is one of the few ancient city walls in China that remains well preserved today. The six kilometers city wall originally had seven gates and gate towers. Now, only four remain. They are the Jingyuemen (靖越门), Xingshanmen (兴善门), Zhenningmen (镇宁门) and Chaotianmen (朝天门). In 1984, the local authorities opened a gate at the middle of the western wall called Wangjiangmen (望江门).

You may go by air to Luqiaoqu Airport in Taizhou and take a taxi to Linhai with a 40-minute drive, or to Ningbo Airport and go by car to Linhai with an hour's drive. If you go by land, it will take you two hours and a half from Hangzhou and an hour and a half from Ningbo to Linhai. The tourism advice telephone number is 0576-5309958

From Linhai, you can drive south to Wenling and from Wenling to Shitang (石塘), at the tip of a small peninsula where the new millennium first dawned on the Chinese mainland. Shitang used to be an islet, but due to sedimentation in the port, it was connected to the mainland and became a fishing town. The earliest settlers were from Hui'an, Fujian province, who happened to come to Shitang while seeking refuge from a storm. They found the rocky place hemmed in by mountains on three sides an ideal place for a fishermen's home. They built their huts, roads and walls with rocks quarried locally.

The town features sturdy rock structures – the houses, the streets, the lanes and the steps are all made of rock. The windows are chiseled from hard granite. The window frames are either in the propitious shape of a double fish, a lion or a gourd signifying a bumper harvest or catch. Black tiles or white stones in sharp contrast are placed on the roofs of the stone houses as flowery edges or in forms of Chinese characters such as double happiness. The stone houses are well adapted to the rocky rolling environment, giving an impression of strength and masculine power. They can not only withstand the frequent attacks of typhoons in summer, but are also cool in summer and warm in winter.

The rocky cliffs that face the sea are inscribed with masterful calligraphic works that eulogize the harmony of the sea scene with heaven or the beauty of the moon over the sea. Southwest of Shitang is Tingtian Temple (listening to the sky temple, 听天寺) that faces the sea with Lion Mountain on the left, Tiger Mountain on the right and Lion Peak at the back. It is a place to watch the towering sea waves hitting the rocks on shore and compose poems. Three rocky islets with pebbly beaches and dark pine groves are dotted off the coast.

The local fishermen have certain taboos, which visitors should be aware of. When they eat fish, they would not take out the eyes and would never turn it over in the dish, as it might mean the boat will capsize. Before the boats set out to sea, women are not allowed on board and you should never board a boat wearing sandals made of straw. When the fishermen return to shore from the sea, they will drink liquor mixed with eggs and sugar. They would never permit others to splash water onto their body.